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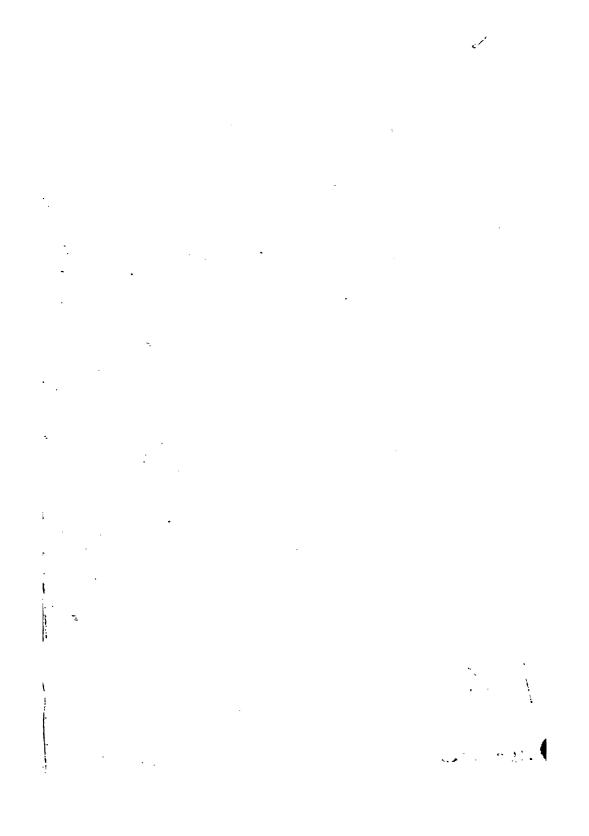
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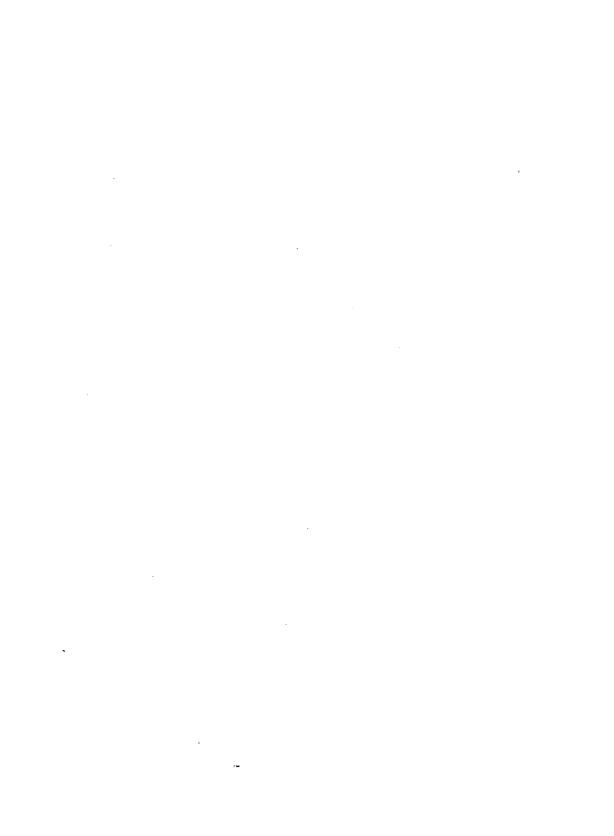
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BY EDMUND VANCE COOKE

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By

Edmund Vance Cooke
Author of "Chronicles of the Little Tot."

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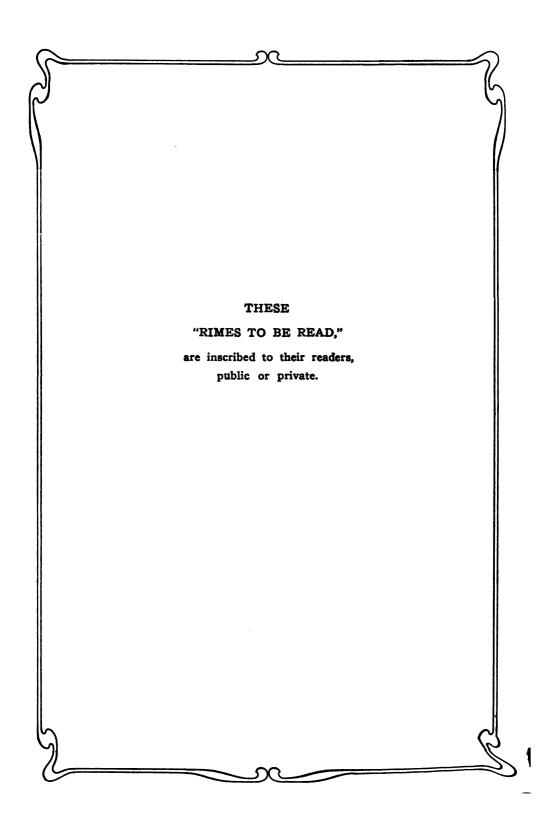
NOTE.

HE author takes pleasure in expressing his obligations to the "New York Sun," "Cleveland Press," "Chicago Record-Herald," "St. Nicholas," "Youth's Companion," "Journal of Education," "Saturday Evening Post," "What-to-Eat," "New York Herald," "Truth," "Metropolitan Magazine," "Puck," "New York Clipper," "The Delineator," "Lippincott's," "Smart Set," "Munsey's" and the papers of the Newspaper Enterprise Association, which various publications first presented most of these verses in print.

In the present volume, an even half of the titles appeared in the former editions of the book, four of them are from "A Patch of Pansies," and twenty-six of them have never before been between covers.

E. V. C.







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'Tis in a mother's morning kiss and in the last at night,

And baby's little reaching arms express the same delight.

"Glad to see you!" O, you friends of dead yesterday, Could we only hear it from your dear lips far away; Could we tell it into ears which mingle now with clay,

We might gain that fuller meaning which the simple words convey.

Say, "I'm glad to see you," then, to those who still are here.

Say it with that meaning which is music to the ear. More than simply say it; words are cheap, but deeds are dear;

And men will say it back to you and make their meaning clear.

Tales, Grave and Gay.





THE STORY OF OLD GLORY.

TELL a tale which is not new,
But, O, as long as truth is true,
As long as Freedom sets the pace
Of progress for the human race,
As long as it is our intent
That All shall be the Government,
As long as Rights of Man shall be
The heritage of you and me
As long as unslaved thought is dear,
So long will all men pause to hear,
The story of Old Glory.

In seventeen seventy-six its red
First from the rising sun is shed;
In seventeen seventy-six its white
First blends along the gladdened light;
Its thirteen starry gems of heaven
Flash forth in loyal seventy-seven.
O, not of warp and woof and dye
Is born that banner of the sky!
It forms from out the heart and brain
Of Patrick Henry, Franklin, Paine!
It floats out proud and high and free
In souls of Otis, Adams, Lee!
Of Quincy, Sherman, Jefferson!
Of Hancock, Warren, Washington!
And so in valor is begun

The story of Old Glory.

(15)



Then Gage, Howe, Clinton and Burgoyne
And Hessians hired by British coin;
Cornwallis, with his lordly crest,
Rhal, Tarleton, Parker and the rest,
Strive hard to blot that flag from sight.
But, armored in their sense of right,
Come Putnam, Prescott, Allen, Stark,
Men of a strong and sturdy mark;
Come Ward, Montgomery, Schuyler, Greene,
And all the list which lies between,
From Marion to LaFayette.
Right gallantly the foe is met!
They make the flag acknowledged free,
For kingcraft's rule is not to be
The story of Old Glory.

In times of war or times of peace, Its marches onward never cease. 'Tis borne by Clark and Lewis on To far-off shores of Oregon.

It floats on Fulton's boat, which steam First forces up against the stream And see! how on the air it rides In triumph o'er Old Ironsides. 'Tis borne by Perry on the Lakes And proud defiance bravely shakes From Tripoli to Mexico!

Not always right, too well we know,



But all the more, then, must we care
That no oppression more shall share
The story of Old Glory.

Then comes the time its own stern sons Turn on it their revolted guns. But though Lee musters gallant horde, With Jackson's swift and sudden sword, With Johnston's cool and cunning skill, With Bragg and Longstreet's strenuous will; Though Morgan makes audacious dash, Though Stuart seems the lightning flash, Though Hood's impetuous men are hurled And Pickett's charge astounds the world, Yet-Grant and Appomattox come, And stifled is the warlike drum. Even in the hour when loval Grief Moans by the body of The Chief, The monster, Civil Hate, is slain; State clasps the hand of State again, And, from the rock-bound coasts of Maine To every sunlit Texan plain, There echoes back but one refrain;-The story of Old Glory.

Still floats the flag! Its stars increase Through the triumphant times of peace. Still floats the flag—in 'seventy-six, When all the nations intermix



In honor of our liberty. Still floats the flag in 'ninety-three, When mankind comes from earth and sea To that Dream City of the West, Where Art and Marvel greet the guest. Still floats the flag in 'ninety-eight To free the serfs of Spanish hate, And, gladdened by the smiling May, From Cuba floats the flag away! More honored with its proud folds furled, And faith redeemed before the world, Than tho' it floated wide and far In hideous, tho' successful, war. And is our honor less of worth In other islands of the earth? Nay! this our motto! We are strong, And strength's best use is righting wrong. So be it told in speech and song!-The story of Old Glory.

I know that we are told its red
Is of the blood its heroes shed,
Its white the smoke of battle air,
Its blue the garb its soldiers wear;
But O, believe not that its stars
Are only bursting shells of wars!
Believe not that its red and white
But symbolize the stripes which smite!
Nay, rather think those stars are eyes,
Eternal, godlike, of the skies;

(18)



Its red the flame of loyalty,
Its white the badge of purity,
Its blue the blue of Freedom's sky—
And then we know shall never die
The story of Old Glory.



THE ANARCHIST.

YES, Wallace Wright was an anarchist. Nay, sir, hold back your blame;

And pause, O woman of high degree, before you cry his shame;

And you, fair maid with the spotless soul, shrink not before his name.

But why for Anarchy? Would he turn the world from its ways of work?

Would he make the scholar a millman, or the untaught ditcher clerk?

Did he covet the honest spoil of toil, himself content to shirk?

Listen and know. I think not so, and yet it well might be,

With a boyhood spent at a working bench instead of a mother's knee;

With ten hours toiling daily, for a pittance, year by year.

For children are many and cheap, my friends, and dollars scarce and dear.

Yet he did not coarsen in mind or heart, that kin or comrades saw,

But he worked, he thrived, matured and wived, and still he believed in law.

(20)



Her softest wish was a law to him, and sweet was the hard-won bread,

And the steadiest man in all the shops was Wallace Wright, they said.

But the times grew hard and the wage was cut, and amid the ensuing strife

The first black shadow of Anarchy came into our workman's life,

For his bench-mate there, in the shop, was one from the far-off Volga's side,

Who had seen his sister dragged to shame and his father scourged till he died,

Who had seen his mother go raving mad, had seen it all dry-eyed,

And then he had sworn such an oath of oaths that the depths of hell replied.

And Wallace was stirred by the Russian and honestly shared his grief,

But would not hear of the Red Reform, with its promise of swift relief—

Relief from the grinding greed of man, from the wrongs of class and state,

Relief from a hundred things he saw, with the fervor of honest hate.

Yes, he knew his own and his fellows' wrongs, and his very soul grew sore,

But what of that? It was all forgot when he entered his cottage door.

(21)



Then the times waxed worse and they let men go, and Wallace among the rest.

Discharged for his long, hard service! for it made his wage the best,

And the high must go to retain the low, when price is the crucial test.

No work! 'tis a thought to rebuke the heart for its dance within the breast.

No, not for you who read this word and think of a thousand friends,

Nor you with a dozen talents, all pat on your fingers' ends,

But for him who knows but to do one thing, and who earns no more than he spends,

Work, constant work, is the needful thing on which his life depends.

Then the Russian came.

"Are you ready now to mingle with Freedom's set?"

But Wallace had only gravely smiled and had shaken his head: "Not yet."

Then day by day he sought for work. Do you understand? He sought,

As no man ever sought gold or fame, for toil—and he found it not.



The quick, curt word, the rough rebuff, the careless sign of the head,

Were his till his face was sharp with care and his heavy heart like lead.

And every night when he sought his home, with an aching, haunting dread,

His wife looked up. She spoke no word, but mournfully drooped her head

To hide the fear of her mother-heart, the fear that would not be gone;

The fear for the babe unborn, whom want already laid clutches on.

Then there came a day when they had to face the terrible word, "Vacate!"

The owner was "Sorry of course, but then, that didn't keep the estate."

And the Russian came.

"Are you ready, Wright?" "Not yet!" he gasped, "not yet!

I have still my wife and hope and life! and there must be work to get."

A wretched hovel received them. They struggled from bad to worse,

Till death seemed only happiness and life was the greater curse.

(23)



And then she sickened; her life ebbed, ebbed, and nevermore turned its tide,

And Wallace had only wildly prayed that he might be laid at her side,

For he knew she had died from cruel want, in a fruitful, generous earth;

And the quiet babe at her side, he knew, was starved before its birth.

And the Russian came.

"Well, Wallace Wright, are you still content with life?

You talked to me of Society's claim, and Society killed your wife.

Society grinds and kills us all, and you will not make it rue it.

You talked to me of your God, and He—He let Society do it."

Can you blame the man, who, in wild despair, pressed lips to the lips of his dead

And arose and looked at the Russian? "Lead on! I will go," he said.

A month had passed and the Red Reform to which he had joined his fate

Had issued its edict against a man who had earned its cruel hate—



Who had earned its hate, for his wealth was used to oppress and not to raise;

And the sterner the bargain in flesh and blood, the more was his own self-praise.

And hence the decree of the Red Reform, with fifty men in the plot,

Where forty and nine had voted "Kill!" and one had voted not.

That one you know, yet his name was first to be drawn in the fateful lot,

And his Russian friend was the second, so the Red Reform decreed

"That the monster yield his life to man, and that these two do the deed."

"Twas the fated day—a holiday—and the noisy throng poured out,

Full-fed with the chaff of cheers and jeers, of the sounding laugh and shout,

In that strange way that a world is gay, all heedless of what about.

Then down the street came the day's event, the glittering grand parade,

And Wallace knew that the man they sought was one of the cavalcade.

That man was the man for whom his brow had sweat with the wet of years.

Who had drained his life of hope and joy and left there want and tears,

(25)



Who had taken work from his hand when work was another name for life,

Who had taken his home from his head—from hers—who had killed, yes, killed his wife.

Half dazed, half crazed, stood Wallace Wright, with the single thought in his head

That the life of this man of plenty would pay for his stricken dead.

Then the Russian said: "When the carriage comes to the crossing just below,

You spring and seize the horses' heads and I will deal the blow:

Then shout: 'This much for the Red Reform!' but if I should chance to miss,

As soon as I'm clear of the carriage you finish the work with this."

And The Deed came near and nearer, when, close at his side, a child

Cried out her baby greeting, and the doomed man looked and smiled

And flung from his glove a kiss, as of love unselfish and undefiled.

Lo! the purpose of Wallace vanished, like the dark before the sun,

At the love in the wee child's laughter and the thought if The Deed were done



How she would be robbed as he had been and the sweet face marred with grief,

How a hate would fill the little soul for him, who had been the thief.

Yet there was his friend, the Russian, no cause should make betray:

And there was the man who had wronged him, who blighted the summer day.

A moment of wavering anguish, a moment of doubt and dread.

Then, disregarding the passing steeds, he sprang for his friend instead.

But the terrible knife was naked; it glittered, it rose, it sank,

But it did not find its target; 'twas Wallace's blood it drank,

While the crowd closed in on the Russian, who fought them front and flank.

With curses and cries and blows they closed; Wright madly strove to save him:

Was seized, was bound, and on him they found the bomb that the Russian gave him.

The rest is simply, quickly told. They scented the deeper plot

And offered Wallace a pardon's bribe, but he answered them, "For what?

(27)



Do you think I would bring another here to ease or share my lot?

Betray a friend for a pardon? For a thousand I would not,

Though you keep me here in prison walls till they or I shall rot!"

So they juried and judged him guilty and gave him the law's extent,

And all of his wrongs re-woke in him and his inmost soul was rent,

Yet he smiled to the Russian a sad "Good-by," as into his cell he went.

He did not hear the confession that the other's tongue poured out,

As, with calm and clear conciseness which the listeners could not doubt,

He told the story of Wallace: how the workshop thrust him out;

Of all the bitter battle; of how it had come about

He had cast his lot with the Red Reform; how, alone, he plead for life

For the man the clan had sworn should die; and at last he had stopped the knife

With his own rag-covered bosom; how he even then proved true

To him who had pierced his body, though with unintent, God knew!

(28)



"And this is the man," said the Russian, "you have dared to condemn—you, you—

By the Lord! no soul in all the whole of your Mammon-serving crew

Should think it other than honor to latch that hero's shoe!"

And then they remembered his boyhood days, remembered his manhood shown

In a hundred kindly, simple acts amongst people he had known,

Remembered the Russian's story, yes, even a trifle more;

Why, even the man whose life he saved, said, "He wasn't bad, at the core!"

So the Governor sent a pardon and they opened his grated door

And found him as dead as the pitiless stone which formed his prison floor.

They said that his wound had bled within. I doubt it not. Ah me!

There's many a wound which bleeds within we haven't the trick to see.

But they said that his face wore a smile of grace.

Was it joy to escape from earth?

Or was it for wife—and that little one, which had starved before its birth?



CONNOR McCARTHY.

A H, gud marnin', sir, 'dade and I'm hearty and glad that the weather is fine.

Sure it isn't ould Connor McCarthy that's goin' to mope and to whine

Because he can't make the world over. Yes, sir, that's me bit of a place.

Sure I love every leaf on the clover and know every buttercup's face.

"Dan says its a toomble-down shanty, and not fit to live in, says Lou;

So they're payin' me board. They have planty and both of 'em free wid it, too.

And I'm takin' me sup where they bid me, but most of the time I'il be found

Right here, where there's nobody wid me—or nobody still on the ground.

"Of course it's an ould fellow's notion, and yet I'm half thinkin' it's true

That the girl I brought over the ocean is a-doin' her waitin' here, too.

The childer see no cause fer sorrow and say I'm a-weakenin' fast,

But young people live fer to-morrow, while ould people live fer the past.

(30)



"The girl I brought over was Mary—my Mary, God's peace to her soul!

And never a word went contrary and never a heartache but stole

Straight back to the land it was born in, afraid of the peace in her eyes,

Eyes soft as the stars of the mornin' and blue wid the blue of the skies.

"And never a worriment found me, but Mary's kiss laid it to rest.

And whin her two arms went around me, I held all the world to me breast!

You smile, sir, because I'm revealin' what most of us hide. But it's true,

And surely you know that same feelin', or elsewell, God's mercy on you!

"I loved her. I envied her shadow because it could lay at her feet,

While I, wid the stock in the m'adow or down in the corn and the wheat.

Was workin' fer bread fer the darlin'. And she was as jealously warm

And vowed she was often fer quarrelin' wid the coat that was touchin' me arm.

"And so we lived on here together, as happy as childer at play,

Till Danny was born, sir, and whether I blessed or regretted the day

(31)



I couldn't have told at your biddin'. I loved the wee broth of a boy

As he lay there, all swaddled and hidden—ten pounds, sir, of genuine joy!

"And yet even joy goes contrary and has a best side and a worst,

Fer soon I was second to Mary and Danny the baby was first.

What! jealous, you say, of a baby? That baby me own blood and bone?

You call me a fool, sir, but maybe your love never burned like me own.

"I was jealous; I know it; I knew it. But never a word did I say,

But loved wife and baby all through it, and worked fer them day after day.

But O, things had changed. Why, the garden had lost half its green to me sight.

I felt 'most like askin' God's pardon fer bringin' such stuff to the light.

"The long-legged calf and the cow there; the new, nakid lamb in the field,

The shaggy, ould horse in the plow there; the corn wid its promisin' yield

Were yesterday pictures of beauty. The commonest rail in the fence

Seemed proud to be doin' its duty, but now 'twas all dollars and cents.



Ah, sad is the day that must borrow its light from a day of the past,

And sad when you turn from to-morrow to a yesterday never to last.

"Then came baby Lucy, a-makin' a change I don't yet understand,

But all the delight Dan had taken came back in her wee, baby hand.

Ah, she was my bit of a fairy! Me soul warmed again in me breast.

I was fonder of her than of Mary, and she learned to love me the best,

And would turn from her mother's own shoulder and cry to be taken by me,

And somehow that made Mary colder, but I never noticed, you see,

"For I was that taken wid Lucy. The color came back to the sky;

The sun seemed to shine wid a use he had almost forgotten to try,

The use, sir, of warmin' a fellow, the inside as well as the out,

Of spendin' his glorious yellow to buy us from worry and doubt

And all of that foolish complainin' the happiest folks seem possessed

Forever to be entertainin', like Mary and me, wid the rest.



"You might not have thought, had you seen us, each one wid a child to the heart,

Those babies had come in between us and were pushing us farther apart.

Though both of us keenly could feel it, we let it run on to the worst;

The years failed to stop it or heal it, and one day the awful storm burst.

"When married folks keep on a-livin', each holdin' some things from the light,

They both must do lots of forgivin' before matters settle down right.

And Mary was little on meekness and I—I could hardly be bent,

And both counted kindness a weakness; and so she took Danny—and went.

You've heard that she went wid another. A lie! on me soul, 'tis a lie!

And yet, sir, in some way or other, you've heard—but of that by and by.

"Bit by bit, sir, I sold every acre, exceptin' this lot that you see,

A-tryin' to find her and make her take money enough to be free

From poverty's pinch, till one marnin' (it still sets me heart beatin' hard)

Widout the least bit of a warnin' I saw a lad run up me yard.



And open the door. It was Danny! The rascal had grown full a head!

Ah, but I was as soft as a granny and hugged him and kissed him and said,

'Your mother, Dan? Quick, don't torment me wid waitin',' and then

He gave me the letter she sent me. I mind every scratch of the pen.

"'Dear Connor: I send you me jewel. I've kept him as long as I could,

But now, though it's horribly cruel and hurts me, it's all for his good.

I'm not fit to raise him, so, Connor, you make him the man he should be.

Forgive his poor mother's dishonor and kiss little Lucy for me.'

"That was all. But O, Father in Heaven! the words seemed to burn in me brain

And everything else there was driven away by their terrible pain.

'Dishonor!' No more a pure woman, nevermore wid a right to the name,

The highest of everything human? I cried like a child wid the shame.

And then I determined to reach her, to find her and help her to live,

To give her a chance and to teach her that God, yes, and I—could forgive.

(35)



"Then came every friend and relation, wid, 'Connor, it never will do.'

'The childer,' they said, 'Reputation,' and 'Just at their time of life, too.'

And so, for the son and the daughter, I gave up the mother and wife,

But O, it was hard, hard to blot her quite out of me heart and me life.

"The childer grew up. Lucy married, position and money and all.

Dan made his way easy and carried the town for recorder last fall.

'Last fall.' Yes, last fall in September, I heard from me Mary. She sent

And begged me to come, to remember the dear, early days we had spent

As husband and wife and to hasten, to come widout losin' a day.

My! my! how me ould legs went racin' to Danny and Lucy, but they,

They said, 'Send her money, but, father, you can't carry out all yer plan.

Don't let her come back, for we'd rather let bygones be dead, when we can.'

"'Send money.' God's mercy! what's money when souls are a-starvin' to death?

Dan said if the campaign were done he wouldn't have hindered a breath,

(36)



But now... Ah, 'but now;' the same reason that always was ready to tell...

'But now!' Was there never a season when mercy was free from its spell?

"I went to me Mary. I found her that sick that me heart nearly broke.

She died, but my arms were around her. My name was the last word she spoke.

She always had loved me, and better than that, she had always been pure.

The terrible words of her letter were not what we fancied, for sure,

Her heart was that true to her Connor, her conscience so tender, you see,

Her leavin' her home seemed dishonor and so she had called it to me.

"I hope you don't mind my relatin' me story. It's nothin', but I,

I lived it, you see. Now I'm waitin', yes, waitin', contented to die.

I've got no reproach for the livin'. I've nothin' but love for the dead,

I hope me own past is forgiven, and as for what's comin' ahead,

Who can tell? Maybe joy, maybe sorrow, but surely there's some place, at last,

Where old people live for to-morrow, as well as look into the past."



THE YOUNG MAN WAITED.

TN the room below the young man sat. With an anxious face and a white cravat, A throbbing heart and a silken hat, And various other things like that, Which he had accumulated. And the maid of his heart was up above. Surrounded by hat and gown and glove, And a thousand things which women love, But no man knoweth the names thereof-And the young man sat and-waited.

You will scarce believe the things I tell, But the truth thereof I know full well. Though how may not be stated; But I swear to you that the maiden took A sort of a half-breed, thin stove-hook And heated it well in the gaslight there And thrust it into her head, or hair! Then she took a something off the bed, And hooked it onto her hair, or head, And piled it high, and piled it higher, And drove it home with staples of wire! And the young man anxiously-waited.

Then she took a thing she called "a puff," And some very peculiar, whitish stuff, And using about a half a peck, She spread it over her face and neck, (38)



(Deceit was a thing she hated!) And she looked as fair as a lilied bower. (Or a pound of lard, or a sack of flour) And the young man wearily-waited.

Then she took a garment of awful shape. And it wasn't a waist, nor yet a cape; But it looked like a piece of ancient mail, Or an instrument from a Russian jail, And then with a fearful groan and gasp, She squeezed herself in its deathly clasp— So fair and vet so fated! And then with a move like I don't know what, She tied it on with a double knot; And the young man woefully-waited.

Then she put on a dozen different things, A mixture of buttons and hooks and strings. Till she strongly resembled a notion store; Then taking some seventeen pins, or more, She thrust them between her ruby lips, Then stuck them around from waist to hips, And never once hesitated. And the maiden didn't know perhaps, That the man below had had seven naps, And that now he sleepily—waited.

And then she tried to put on her hat. Ah me, a trying ordeal was that! She tipped it high and she tried it low, But every way that the thing would go (39)



Only made her more agitated.

It wouldn't go straight and it caught her hair,
And she wished she could hire a man to swear,
But alas! the only man lingering there
Was the man who wildly—waited.

Then a little dab here and a wee pat there,
And a touch or two to her hindmost hair,
Then around the room with the utmost care
She thoughtfully circulated.
Then she seized her gloves and a chamois skin,
Some breath perfume and a long stick pin,
A bon-bon box and a cloak and some
Eau de cologne and chewing gum,
Her opera glass and a sealskin muff,
A fan and a heap of other stuff;
Then she hurried down, but ere she spoke,
Something about the maiden broke,
So she scurried back to the winding stair,
And the young man looked in wild despair,
And then he—evaporated!



THE LABORS OF HERCULES.

(Worked Over in Easy-Going Verse.)

IN Ancient Greece, long time ago, a man was born —or, maybe,

I ought to say a god was born—or, better yet, a baby.

His father's name was Jupiter; Alcmena was his mother,

Who vowed he was "the sweetest pet," and "never such another!"

But Juno, wife of Jupiter, pretended not to know it; She didn't like young Hercules, and straightway sought to show it.

She sent two horrid, monstrous snakes, to eat him in his cradle,

Which reptiles found him sitting eating sugar with a ladle.

They smiled to see how sweet he'd be, but lo! the boy gave battle:

He killed them both and used their tails to make a baby-rattle.

Then Juno let him thrive in peace; but, after he was grown.

He found that she had kept him from a kingdom and

Eurystheus obtained these plums, but night and day was haunted

By tales of mighty Hercules—the hero and undaunted!

(41)



So, after some deep thinking, Eurystheus planned to send him

To do a dozen labors, any one of which might end him.

LABOR I.

The Nemean lion, accustomed to ravage
The country around, being voted too savage,
Our hero was sent to remove him from earth,
With no arms, save the two that he had at his birth.
Brave Hercules blocks up one hole of the den
And enters the other. A silence, and then
Comes a growl, and a roar and a rush, and a shock—
Like waves in the tempest they struggle and rock,
Till Hercules wins the renowned "strangle lock,"
And the lion goes down like a log or a post,
Repents of his sins, and is only a ghost.

LABOR II.

There lived at that epoch, according to story,
A terrible monster, whose principal glory
Consisted of heads, which a strict inventory
Declared to be nine; and one of the same
Was as deathless as Jove, so authorities claim.
Nothing daunted, our Hercules went forth to fight

He cut off one head and two others were sighted.

And thus the solution appeared to his view:

"When you take one from one, the result will be two."



Rather taken aback, but still thoroughly game, He called his hired help, Iolaus by name. Then he shaved off the heads as a man would a beard,

And the necks (by his servant) were carefully seared, Till the deathless head soon was left grinning alone, And that one he buried beneath a big stone.

LABOR III.

The Arcadian stag was a curious kind,
Golden-horned, orazen-hoofed, and could outrun the
wind:

Whoever pursued him was soon left behind.

The mandate was given to capture him living,
So our hero set out without any misgiving.

All over the kingdom he followed the brute,
Till a year was consumed in the useless pursuit.

"Confound you!" said Hercules, seizing his bow,
"I've got something here which I'll wager can go
As fast as two stags." And it proved to be so.

The arrow succeeded in laying him low.

The wound wasn't fatal, so Hercules caught him,
And into the king's haughty presence he brought
him.

LABOR IV.

The boar of Erymanthus was de trop
Which is French for saying how
Bores are looked on, even now.

(43)



Our hero ran the rascal through the snow, Snared him neatly in a net, Picked him up, like any pet, And took him to the capital to add him to the show.

LABOR V.

Augeas, King of Elis, it appears,
Had several thousand oxen in his stable,
But hadn't cleaned the place for thirty years.
The hard taskmaster heard, pricked up his ears
And cried, "Ho! ho! my Hercules, you're able
To do great things. I give you just one day
For this spring cleaning." Stranger to dismay,
Our hero sought the stables of Augeas,
Turned into them the river named Alpheus,
And re-enforced it with the swift Peneus;
These brooms soon swept the dirt away, you have
my word.

Perhaps they swept the stables with it. That I haven't heard.

LABOR VI.

The Stymphalian birds were a horrible lot,
And everyone thought
That they ought
To be shot;
Yet no one had done it, till Hercules brought
His little snake-rattle to set them to flying
And then popped them over, as easy as lying.

(44)



LABOR VII.

A bull, sent by Neptune to die in his honor (?)
Not having been killed was made mad by the donor.
Eurystheus must have been running a "Zoo,"
And having the stag and the boar, wanted, too,
The mad bull of Crete; so he ordered "Go get him!"
Though Hercules never so much as had met him.
But our hero set sail,
Grabbed the bull by the tail,
And took him to Hellas; but not for the Garden,
For, having arrived, he then (begging his pardon
Because he had given his tail such a pull)
Set him free—and all Greece was as mad as the bull.

LABOR VIIL

Diomedes
Used to feed his
Mares on human flesh.
Hercules just cut him up,
Found the mares inclined to sup,
And fed him to them, fresh.
'Twas a most successful plan;
Though before they liked a man
More than oats or anything,
Strange to say, this master-diet
Made them docile, kind and quiet,
To be taken to the king.



LABOR IX.

The Amazon queen had a beautiful belt. 'Twas given by Mars, and the queen justly felt Quite proud of the trifle, but Hercules started To see if the belt and queen couldn't be parted. At first it appeared he had only to ask To receive it, but this was too easy a task To please Mrs. Juno, who stirred up a bolt In the ranks of the Amazons. When the revolt Was reported to Hercules, he rather thought The queen was a traitress and covertly wrought To undo him; so seizing the girdle he sought, He slew her, and thus was it bloodily bought. Which shows that a man may be brave as the best, And yet ungallant, when it comes to a test.

LABOR X.

Geryones had a fine herd of red cattle,
With a two-headed dog and a giant to battle
With any who trespassed upon his domain.
Dog, owner and keeper were met and were slain,
Yet Hercules still had to fight heavy odds,
(A number of men and a parcel of gods)
But in spite of them all, he conducted the string
Of handsome, red beasts to his brute of a king.



LABOR XI.

When Juno was married, the goddess of Earth Presented some apples of excellent worth, Made all of fine gold

From the smooth, shiny skin to the pips in the core.

(Alas! I am told

Such beautiful apples don't grow any more.) But wealth is a worry; nobody need doubt it, Unless, like myself, he is always without it. And Juno was worried until she grew pale; Her nectar was flat, her ambrosia was stale. The fear of a burglar had entered her head, And so every night she looked under the bed. No matter what Jupiter argued or said, She'd wake him at midnight to vow and declare There must be an apple-thief round about there. At last, growing tired of the worry and wear, She placed them in care

Of the sisters Hesperides, living just where

The sun sets at night.

Our hard mot Atlan mi

Our hero met Atlas, who held up the height Of the heavens in air,

And a bargain was struck that the hero should bear The dome for a while, and the action should earn The apples, which Atlas brought back in return. Though I can't understand

Why a chap with a chance to steal apples at hand,



Scot-free of all blame, Should so lose his head As to give up his claim And let somebody else do it for him instead.

LABOR XII.

Pluto, in his world below,

Had a great three-headed beast
Called a dog. Perhaps 'twas so,
But I doubt his breed, at least.
House-dog? Hardly. Poison-drops
Fell from out his gaping chops,
And his fangs were sharp as hate,
And he guarded Pluto's gate.

Hercules was told to fetch
This repulsive, savage wretch.
Hercules with little fuss
Seized the snarling Cerberus,
Took him to the Earth from Hades,
Scared the king in playful sport,
Showed him round to all the court,
Made him bark for all the ladies.
Then the hero let him go,
And he sank to realms below,
One head growling,
One head yowling,
One head howling,
Out dog-curses,
(48)



As mythology rehearses.

And the fun

Of the Labors—all was done.
So are these doggerel verses.

(49)



THE HERO OF THE HILL.

DO you ever stop to watch a horse pull a big load up a hill?

There's something fine about the way he sends his rugged will

Down through those quivering shoulders, till it seems as if he clutched

And hurled the hill behind his heels until the top is touched.

It gives a man new courage when he comes to his steep grade,

To think of that example which the plucky beast has made.

But if the load prove stronger; if the horse, with hoofs outspread,

With reddened nostrils, foaming flanks, and bowing, straining head,

Surrenders to the inert mass, while the driver's only helps

Are strident oaths and the savage sound of the hot, whip's snaps and yelps,

Why then the chief result is, that it makes a fellow feel

He'd like to take that driver's head to block the slipping wheel!



But I remember one time when the driver had a heart,

And worked with mind and muscle to release the stubborn cart

From the clay-rut, when some soldiers who were loafing in the sun

Let fall their lazy jaws to laugh and let their cheap wit run.

One cried, "Say, take that bag of bones and feed him to the crows!"

And "Oh, he'd scare the crows away," the mocking answer rose.

"It'll take a small torpedo, if you ever move that beast."

"Better get one of the size of that which wrecked the 'Maine,' at least."

So ran the jeering comments, till at last a bugler said

"Say, driver, if I blow the charge, d'ye think he'd drop down dead?"

It was then the driver answered, "Well, he might; but let me say

That this old horse has heard the charge when it meant 'Charge!' to obey.

Not on the dress-parade grounds along with chaps like you,

But on the fields of Cuba where the Spanish bullets flew;



And though he's drifted back to me and don't look very trim,

I tell you he's a vet, who has the right stuff yet in him."

"Oh, nonsense!" laughed a sergeant, and "Nonsense!" sneered the rest,

And the bugler raised his bugle, crying, "This'll be the test."

Then out upon the air there fell a dozen liquid tones,

Like prophecies of glory mingling with the ghosts of groans,

The sound the soldier hears—and cheers—although its mellow breath

May send him where the cannon belch their black and bitter death,

The sound which cries, "Destroy, destroy! and let the list be large!"

The ringing of the bugle when it blows the battle charge.

And how the old horse heard it! Up flung his heavy head,

Wide grew his nostrils, straight his ears, and quick the fever spread

Through every nerve and muscle, as he forward plunged and pressed

Straight up the steep, despite his load, and stood upon the crest!

(52)



And were the soldiers laughing now? Not so. The scoffing jeers

Gave way to shame a moment, and then burst forth in cheers.

And the sergeant cried, "Attention, boys! fall in! dress ranks! salute!

Salute the gallant veteran—our comrade, though a brute.

God send him oats and apples and the shelter of a stall,

And grant we be as sturdy when we hear the battlecall!"



IN THE OLD SCHOOLHOUSE.

WELL, well! and can it be?
Is this the same old schoolhouse? Is this
the same old me?

Why, here's the very place

Where Teacher stood the dunce-stool, with me on it, in disgrace.

And here's the old blackboard

Where I ciphered, ciphered, ciphered, till I stopped, completely floored,

While Teacher looked severe,

And forty thumbs and fingers taunted "We know!" in my ear.

And here's the hollow chair

Which I levelled up with water, and when Teacher sat down there

His gasp of wet surprise

Touched giggling springs within, which bubbled out of lips and eyes.

And O, those awful tones

Which meted out my punishment, "You sit with Julia Jones!"

The mirth forsook my face,

And every blood-corpuscle blushed to witness my disgrace.

"O, tyrant, take thy rule

And rap these knuckles loudly, till I howl before the school!

(54)



O, set thy biting birch

Against these legs till not an inch of skin escapes its search!

O, tread me in the dust,

And keep me in at recess till vacation, if thou must! Make sore my very bones,

But cry thee mercy, Teacher, sit me not with Julia Jones!"

Why, here's the very seat

Where I sat next to Julia, sweating blood from head to feet,

While Julia broke a rule

And whispered, "Feel mean if you want to, Phil, but don't look like a fool!"

And then, to show her grit,

She slipped her arm behind me, saying, "I don't mind a bit."

I sat, with lips a-curl,

And marveled why a righteous God should ever make a girl.

But—well, it's very strange,

For in a year or two my views had undergone a change,

And I'd have swapped my bones

For the punishment of sitting all my life with Julia Jones.

And now! well, can it be

I'm in the same old schoolhouse with the same old dreams in me?



The place is mean and low,
But Athens' classic Parthenon could hardly stir me
so.

The Teacher, where is he?

A blessing on his stern old face, wherever it may be.

And Julia, is she there

Still under the dominion of his tutelary care,

A means of righteous wrath

To punish young male cherubim who tread the wayward path?

I can't believe it. No,

For I left her with the babies hardly half an hour ago,

And my reason quite disowns

A theory which gives her back her maiden name of Jones.



FAME AND FATE

WORK for the world, but art for me!
I shall win my way with the brush," said
she.

She studied art; she studied it hard;
She painted canvases, yard on yard
(For "Art is long," as I'm sure you've heard),
Two strokes, or three
For a blasted tree
And a wiggle or two for a flying bird.
But "art" is sometimes purest gold,
And sometimes merest gilding—
So she "wins her way with the brush," I'm told,
By scrubbing a New York building.

"The world may dig in the dark," said he,
"But the beam of the footlights beckons me."
So he cried in grief and he cried in joy,
He screamed the scream
Of Aram's Dream,
And he groaned the groan of The Polish Boy.
He likewise remarked, "On the murderer's hands
Is the blood of his victim! there he stands!"
And, "Listen, proud maid! You shall be my wife
Even though it shall cost your husband's life."
But "Art is long"—very long—so, too,
Are the miles of ties on the C. B. Q.,
So he's "on the stage"—in Idaho
From Seven Devils to Silver Bow.

(57)



"Love for the common, but mine is fame!"
She cried, "and the world shall know my name."
Corrupting English, she called it "verse,"
While "poetry" graded somewhat worse.
"Now flees my love
As doth the dove
Which moults to feathery clouds above.
Its cryptic cry apace doth haste
And wounds the wind which sweeps the waste."
Ah, "Art is long" (in sad endurance)
And Fame coquettes with bald Assurance.
And now, wherever the English tongue
Is put into print her praise is sung,
For she was cured of manifold ills
By Buncombe Bitters and Pigweed Pills.

"Gold cozens the soul of men, but mine,"
He said, "is filled with the art divine.
Music may lead me whither she may;
I toil at the ivories day by day
Till the world shall gather when I shall play."
He practiced in every conceivable key—
Rumplety, tumplety, tunk tank, tee;
Ripplety, skipplety, lol-la-lee!
Till his brow with an honest dew was wet
And neighboring flats were marked "To Let."
Yes, "Art is long," but the wise retort
That the artist himself is sometimes short,
So the world does gather to watch him play
As he fingers the ivories day by day
In a billiard hall in Santa Fé.



ALMOST UP.

WHERE were you struck?" the captain cried
To him who charged on Lookout's side,
Who charged in all his martial pride,
Up! over rocky ridge and rut,
Up! where the paths of life were shut,
Up! where the death-winged bullets sped,
Up! over dying men and dead;
Nothing could stay his onward tread
Until—that hurtling scrap of lead.

"Where were you struck?" the captain cried, Between the waves of battle's tide, Then, half in anguish, half in pride, Though drinking of the bitter cup, The soldier answered, "Almost up!" "No, no; your wound—where hit, I mean?" But, even in that final scene, True to his last heroic will, "'Most up! 'most up!" he murmured still.

Not where his shattered body bled,
Not where his veins poured out their red,
But where his last hard duty led,
Was all the dying soldier's thought.
And may we learn the lesson taught!—
No matter where our lives are cast,
In sunny peace or battle's blast,
May it be said, when we have passed,
"He struggled upwards to the last!"



BUT THEY DIDN'T.

HARRY came along the lane
And he was very late,
He hurried on to catch a train
And had no time to wait.
He must hasten!—but against the pane
He caught a glimpse of Kate,
And he didn't, he didn't, he didn't.

O, Katie had her doughnuts cut,
Her sponge was light as air;
Her pies were in the oven shut
And needed all her care;
She must give them every moment, but
She spied young Harry there
And she didn't, she didn't, she didn't.

O, Harry stopped and spoke a word
And spoke it very low,
And yet I think that Katie heard
And still believed it so,
Tho' all the while the youth averred
That he would have to go,
But he didn't, he didn't, he didn't.

O, Katie said the fire was warm
And she was "like to drop;"
And Harry seemed to think his arm
Was needed as a prop;
(60)



And Katie was in such alarm
She said that he must stop!
But he didn't, he didn't, he didn't.

For he said he held unto the best
When he had proved it so,
And she drooped her head upon his breast
And said that he must go;
And he said he'd leave that instant
Lest he heard a cruel "No!"
But — —, — —, —



EVOLUTION.

N OW when the original anthropoid

First found that his pimpling skin was void

Of hair,

And bare,

Some ganglial glimmer within the brute Impelled him to look for a substitute.

That fact,

That act,

Was civilization's primal spurt, For a man isn't man without—a shirt.

Then followed an aeon, more or less, With never a change in the creature's dress.

Mayhap

Some chap

May have added breeches, or even a coat, But the purpose was still the same, you'll note

Until

Some thrill

Of pride in appearance began to grow, And he added an outer shirt—for show.

Some anthropologists, you may assert, Say the proud preceded the useful shirt.

'Tis true

They do.

But to answer that I need only say That I am writing this verse, not they.

(62)



And if
You sniff
At that, I furthermore plainly state
My poetical license is paid to date.

Then some brave serf, in a fortunate hour, Destroyed his oppressor and rose to power;

And then

When men

Would sneer at the telltale gall and fleck
Which showed where the chain had thralled his
neck.

His need Decreed

That the neck of his shirt be fashioned taller As a "badge of place." And thus—the collar.

Another step in enlightened pride, And around the collar a cloth was tied.

Complete

And neat

It looked, till one with a golden pin Jauntily stuck the ornament in.

Pride vied With pride,

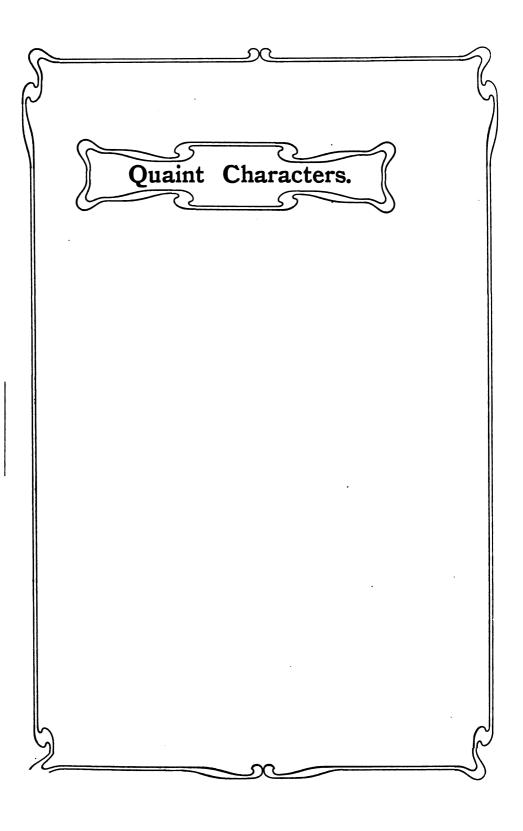
And luxury now with luxury met, And a sparkling jewel in the pin was set.

But the point of the tale is yet to come, For take the jewel in your finger and thumb (63)



And try
The ply
Of collar and neck-dress through and through,
And the prideful shirt and the useful, too
And then
Again!

And the polished pin which you have employed Has scratched the original anthropoid!







"FIN DE SIECLE."

T HIS life's a hollow bubble,
Don't you know?

Just a painted piece of twouble,
Don't you know?

We come to earth to cwy,
We gwow oldeh and we sigh,
Oldeh still and then we die,
Don't you know?

It is all a howwid mix,

Don't you know?

Business, love, and politics,

Don't you know?

Clubs and pawties, cliques and sets,
Fashions, follies, sins, wegwets,

Stwuggle, stwife, and cigawettes,

Don't you know?

And we wowwy through each day,
Don't you know?
In a sort of, kind of, way,
Don't you know?
We are hungwy, we are fed,
Some few things are done and said,
We are tihed, we go to bed,
Don't you know?

(67)



Business? O, that's beastly twade,
Don't you know?
Something's lost or something's made,
Don't you know?
And you wowwy, and you mope
And you hang youah highest hope
On the pwice, pe'haps, of soap!
Don't you know?

Politics? O, just a lawk,
Don't you know?

Just a nightmaeh in the dawk,
Don't you know?

You pe'spiah all day and night
And afteh all the fight,
Why pe'haps the w'ong man's wight,
Don't you know?

Society? Is dwess,
Don't you know?
And a sou'ce of much distwess,
Don't you know?
To detehmine what to weah,
When to go and likewise wheah
And how to pawt youah haih,
Don't you know?

Love? O, yes! You meet some gi'l,
Don't you know?

And you get in such a whi'l,
Don't you know?

(68)



Then you kneel down on the floah
And imploah and adoah—
And it's all a beastly boah!

Don't you know?

So theah's weally nothing in it,
Don't you know?

And we live just for the minute,
Don't you know?

For when you've seen and felt,
Dwank and eaten, heahd and smelt,
Why all the cawds are dealt,
Don't you know?

You've one consciousness, that's all,
Don't you know?

And one stomach, and it's small,
Don't you know?

You can only weah one tie,
One eye-glass in youah eye,
And one coffin when you die,
Don't you know?



DE GOOFEH-JACK.

DE cunjuh-doctah, he mek de cunjuh-bag,
He mek de cunjuh-bag, he mek de cunjuh-bag;
He done mek it out-er a shirt-tail rag
Dat come f'om a blue-gum niggah.
Den he put in de rabbit-foot en alligateh aigg,
He put in de penny dat a dumb man baig,
En a snake's front toof dat stuck a niggah's laig,—
En he put in anothah l'il jiggah.
Den he tek dat bag en he cunjuh you,
He cunjuh you, he cunjuh you;
Whateveh he say, he kin mek you do;
You got no chance en dat's a libbin' fac',
Onless you got you a goofeh-jack.

De voodoo-doctah he mek de goofeh-jack, He mek de goofeh-jack, he mek de goofeh-jack, F'om a stick dat grows in a erf-quake crack, Wif a shape lek a bow-legged niggah. Den he wrap dat stick wif a li'l flannel rag Dat once was a part-er a cunjuh bag, En he say some woids lek "Doodlegumbledag!" En some otheh woids a heap sight biggeh.

Den if some low niggah done cunjuh you, Done cunjuh you, done cunjuh you, Des you grab dat stick, for I tells you true, You got no chance en dat's a libbin' fac', Onless you got you a goofeh-jack.



Dey-us ol' Miss Riley was a-was'in' away,
A-was'in' away, des was'in' right away,
Eatin' bo'lles er medicine ev'ry single day,
But I wa'n't gwine for to trus' it;
So I des git a goofeh en slip' it in de baid,
En it sho would a cu'ed her, lek de voodoo say'd
But de ve'y next mawnin', suh, she wake up daid!
'Caze she roll on de goofeh-jack en bus' it.

So if some low niggah done cunjuh you,
Done cunjuh you, done cunjuh you,
You be right smawt caihful now, whateveh you
do;
'Care you got no chance on dat's a libbin' foc'

'Caze you got no chance, en dat's a libbin' fac', Onless you got a goofeh-jack!



THE OLD MAN KNOWS.

DAN, you'll never find another
Like the hand of yer old mother,
Which has worked and won yer bread.
Yes, more'n that if all be said,
Fer she won and then she made it,
An' such bread! You wouldn't trade it
Fer no banquet, if you knew
How you'll hunger when she's through
Doin' fer you. Don't you s'pose
Like enough the old man knows?

Yes, I know it ain't as milky
In its looks, nor yet as silky
In its feel as some hands be.
But if these old eyes can see,
Ev'ry line's a line of beauty,
Er a mark fer well done duty!
No use talkin', Dan, it's so.
Guess the old man ought to know.

'Nd how ev'ry faded finger Loves to touch you 'nd to linger Round yer hair. You'll understand Better, some day, 'bout that hand. Nothin' else can do as much as Them same tender, peaceful touches.

(72)



How they soothe 'nd how old sorrow Sneaks, until some sad to-morrow. Dan, O Dan, the old man knows, He had a mother, don't you s'pose?



ADAM.

A DAM, made of common earth, Seemed to be of little worth. Giving him his full desert, Still he seemed as cheap as dirt.

Smacked a good deal of the soil, Adam did, but shirked all toil. Yet he asked no man for trust, Being simply made of dust.

Sandy beard and sandy hair; Also had a stony stare; And before his flesh ran blood I suppose his name was mud.

Poor old Adam, formed in clay, Wasn't of the stuff to stay. One more process was required; That's the reason he was fired!



NOT A COON-SONG COON.

I 'SE a right smaht niggeh,
 I kin read en I kin figgeh,
 En I doesn't nuvver, nuvver play no craps.
I doesn't give a button
Fo' a cake-walk or a cuttin',
 En dat am what de trouble is, pe'haps.
I doesn't spen' meh dollahs
On no shiny shoes en collahs,
 En meh habits sholy ought to make a hit;
But de ladies seems to shake me,
En dey's not a one 'll take me—
I ain't nuvver is had a gal yit!

Dey wuz coffee-cullud Jinny
En Sooky Loo en Minny
En freckled Fan en Mandy Ann en Sue;
Dey was Tildy, dey was Dinah
En Luce en little Lina;
(I nuvver wanted on'y des a few!)
Dey was Nance dat married Peter,
En I'se moughty glad he beat her;
En Ulussus wa'n't no better, ca'se dey fit;
But she wouldn't leave him, no, suh,
Wouldn't marry me; en so, suh,
I ain't nuvver is had a gal yit!



The state of the s

I has sometimes wunde'd

Ef dese niggehs has 'em cunjuh'd;

Ef dey hasn't, it am somepin moughty queer!

Dey is Race-Hoss Bennie,

He doesn't seem so many,

But he gin'ally gits married ev'y year!

Dey was Pete have seven

En he gwinter come eleven

En' Ulussus have a dozen 'fore he quit;

Dey all done have so many

Dat dey has n't luff me any—

I ain't nuvver is had a gal yit!



AN UNCONVENTIONAL RUSTIC.

PO'TRY fellers says we like to drink Worter from the ol' mill stream, Like to git down on the brink So's it runs right down our stummick-"like a dream," Says them po'try men. Then again They say how we love to draw it from the well-"Moss-bound bucket," and that sort o' thin'. Says we much prefer a gourd, er ole sea shell, Er a rusty dipper, made o' tin Fer to drink it in, But, by Gee! Yer cut glass, Sevvers chiny stuff is good enough Po'try fellers says there ain't no bed Ouite so good as that un in the old homestead. I say durn it And dad burn it!

To a soft spot Like it ought,

Yeh sag between

If you're thin Not a bone fits in

Durn its feather bed-tick that's so lean

All the slats and almost touch the floor If yeh weighs ten pounds or more.



But rubs, rubs, on some blame slat; So if I know where I'm at, Hairy, springy, couchy city beds'll do Fer me, I jus' tell you!

Po'try fellers says if we have stacks Of ham fer breakfas', coffee an' flap-jacks, With a dinner of biled cabbage an' corn beef, An' p'serves an' pie fer supper, you got lief To have all the rest. Is 'at so? Guess if they met me they'd likely know That I'd take some olives, lemon ice, Lobster salad, bullion an' a slice Of boiled tarpot, with some tutty-frutty, An' a little of that stuff, a la spaghutty, Frummidge, ice cream an' assorted pie, Quail on puddin', sherbet, oyster fry-Anythin' else yeh got, An' fetch her quick an' hot. Coffee? No, sir, take the stuff away; Pomeroy Chartruse, extry dry, will do me any day.

Po'try fellers says we love to walk, 'Cause it's healthfuller an' lots more air Sizzles through yer lungs, an' they talk How when we do ride 'at we don't care Fer no bridles, but jest slides On a horse an' gits.

Say it sort o' fits

Us most to take straw-rides,

(78)



'R else to ride the good ol'-fashioned way,
In the family shay,
Which ain't got no springs,
Ner cushions, an' which slings
You'n yer girl together (which yeh like)
Till it steadies when yeh strike
The ol' turn-pike.
Po'try fellers talks that way,
But a-speakin' fer myself, I say
A autymobile-tally-ho will do me any day.

Po'try fellers further says our homes Is pomes, Says the flicker of the fire-place is a sight Chuck full of warm delight, While the winter breezes kindly fans yer backs Through the cracks; Says the suller an' the butt'ry is the best To keep things sweet in. An' the sittin' room's fer rest, An' the kitchen fer to eat in. Says there ain't no place on earth quite like the attic. Speshly when the weather's rainy an' rumattic. An' it spatters on the roof an' on the pane, (Not the rumytism doesn't, but the rain!) Which is very slick an' pretty, But them houses in the city.

All fixed up like ole Queen Annie's used to be.



Brown stone roof an' mansard front—by Gee! Such a house is good enough fer me!

Po'try fellers takes a lot o' pains To show they got no brains, But the foolest thing they does—it seems to me— Is to chalk Down the darndest lot of words you ever see An' say that's how we talk. Gosh all hemlock! Why they chop Half the words to pieces an' they stop 'Fore they've finished spellin' of 'em, An' they're full of little wiggles up above 'em. Why, ther spellin' would disgrace the dumbest fool In the spellin' class at Districk School. An' ther grammar's the most worse you ever see! Why, if you an' me Couldn't talk no more correcter-Geemeenee! 'Scuse me, but it makes me hot to see things wrote that way. Good, old Angly Saxon English talk is my ch'ice any day.



BEFORE PLAYING TINKERTOWN.

(A Distinguished Citizen Advises the Advance Agent.)

SO you're goan to give a show?
Well, I s'pose you likely know
Yer own bus'ness, but I'm glad
—Ez fer me—I never had
Money in the show biz here,
Fer our folks is mighty queer.
An' you see when they first built
Our new Op'ry House, they kilt
The hull business, 'cause they give
More shows than could run—an' live.

"Give two in one week, one time.
One was minstrels. They was prime!
But what kilt us was the other;
Some blame lecturer or-ruther
Talked about a Chiny wall
An' a Pyramids an' all
That there sort o' rot. An' so,
Bein' as folks had paid, you know,
Fifteen cents to see a show,
Lots of 'em felt ruther sore
An' don't go to shows no more.



"Course your show is good? No doubt. But you see the town's showed out; Less'n three weeks back we had Hamlut. Had it purty bad. Actors—they was purty fair, Speshly one with yeller hair. He had talunt! He could shout An' jes' drown the others out! But the play itself was sad. 'Sides it was a draggy, bad Sort of sadness. Didn't begin To come up to ol' East Lynne!

"Jabez Tubbs, he sez, sez he,
'I'll take ol' East Lynne fer me,
Mebbe these new plays is fine,
But I'll take the ol' fer mine.'
'Scuse me fer goan on this way,
But I'm 'feared yer show won't pay.

"It's a bad week fer a show,
'Cause most folks that gits to go
Is a-restin' up jest now
Fer the Social. An' that's how
Things most always is 'round here.
P'r'aps there's nothin' fer a year,
Then, first thing a feller knows,
We're just overrun with shows.

(82)



"P'r'aps a little later might
Find a better week an' night.
Still, I dunno, fer ye see
P'tracted meetin' soon'll be,
An' of course you know that's free,
An' that nachelly kills a show
Where you got to pay to git to go."



A LITTLE SAUNTER.

W HEN the sun's a-comin' up 'nd ole Earth is wet,

Jest as though he'd washed his face 'nd hedn't dried it yet;

Birds fer miles 'nd miles around chipperin' 'n' singin',

Pigs a-gruntin' music fer the feed the man's a bringin'.

Rooster crowin' fit to split round the kitchen door, Ans'erin' "Good mornin'," to a half a dozen more,—

Other folks can roust around, but for me I wanter
Take a little saunter.

Fill up full of green 'nd blue in a little saunter.

When the sun's a-goin' down, lazy ez you please, Settin' good example fer a man to take his ease; Cows a-lyin', chewin', 'nd a-wobblin', early bat Er a sparreh, half asleep, flies a-past yer hat; When yev hed yer supper 'nd the world seems good; When the air, jest lazin' round, smells of piney wood.—

'Tain't no time to roust around, 'nd fer me, I wanter Take a little saunter,

Jest hang back 'n' let my legs take a little saunter.



When you almost feel the moon a-shinin' on yer back,

(See her in the warter 'nd she seems to make a track Leadin' off to Heaven, jest a easy distance walkin';) When it's all so still, a sound seems like silence talkin';

Starry eyes a-gawpin' like the childern's to a story; Room fer nothin' nowhere 'ceptin' night 'nd God 'nd glory,—

I jest dassent roust around, 'nd I never wanter

Do no more than saunter,

Fill up full of shiny peace in a little saunter!



REVENGE.

VEN ich und Gretchen married got, Mein olt frient Dunkelschwarzenrath, He don'd coom vere my veddin ees, Becos I nefer gone by hees!

Aber, I get me efen yet.

Dot Dunkelschwarzenrath is deat.

I don'd go by hees fooneral—nein!—

Becos he nefer gone by mine!



UNVERSTAENDLICH.

DHE contrariest t'ing on dhe Erd is men,
Aber vimmens arr twice so contrary again,
Andt I am yoost so contrary as you,
Andt you arr as worse as dhe worst one, too;
Now, ain'd dhat zo?

You like to haf hoonger by dinner, you say,
Aber vhy do you eadt, so dhat hoonger go 'vay?
You like to be tired, so you schleep like a top,
Andt you like to go schleep, so dhat tired feeling
shtop;

Now, ain'd dhat zo?

You like to have sugar on sauer t'ings you eadt Andt you like to haf sauer mit dhe t'ings vhat arr sweet.

You like to be cold when dhe vetter is hot.

Andt when it is cold, ach, how varm you vould got!

Now, ain'd dhat zo?

How you shdare at dhe man vhat can valk up dhe street

On his handts, yet you valk twice so goodt on your feet.

Vhat a long mind you haf, if I am in your debt, Budt if you arr in mine, O, how quick you forget! Now, ain'd dhat zo?

(87)



Are you single? You like to be married, of course. Are you married? Most likely you like a divorce! Andt if you vas get you unmarried, why dhen You go righd avay and got married again.

Now, ain'd dhat zo?

You vant yoost a liddle more money? Dhat's true; Andt dhere's Mistare Vanderbilt; he vants dhat too. You remember dhat time dhat you wish you arr deadt?

Budt if I trry to kill you, you boost in my headt; Now, ain'd dhat zo?

Zo, I t'ink I pelief only haf vhat I know
Andt dhe half I pelief is dhe part vhat ain'd zo.
Aber, I don'd complain, for dhat makes me no use,
For if I am a Esel, vhy you arr a goose;
Now. ain'd dhat zo?

It is bedter to laugh; it is foolish to fight Yoost because I am wrong and because you ain'd right.

It is bedter to laugh mit dhe vorld, up andt down
From dhe sole of our headt to dhe foot of our
crown;
Now, ain'd dhat zo?

Zo, dhen you laugh at me andt dhen I laugh at you, Andt dhe more dhat you laugh vhy dhe more I laugh, too,

Andt ve laugh till ve cry! Vhen ve cry, aber dhen, Ve will bot' feel zo goot ve go laughing again! Now, ain'd dhat zo?

(88)



KATIE AN' ME.

K ATIE an me a'n't ingaged anny moor.

Och, but the heart of me's breakin', fer sure!

The moon has turned grane and the sun has turned yallow,

And Oi am turned both and a different fallow. The poipe of me loiftoime is losin' its taste; Some illigant whuskey is goin' to waste; Me heart is that impty and also me arrum; Pertaties an' bacon have lost all their charrum, And Oi feel like a tombstone, wid crape on the dure. Since Katie and me a'n't ingaged anny moor.

Yit most of the world is a-movin' alang
As if there was nawthin' at all goin' wrang.
Oi notice the little pigs lie in the mud,
An' the fool of a cow is still chewin' her cud;
The shky is still blue and the grass is still bright;
The stars shine in hivin in paceful delight;
The little waves dance on the brist of the lake;
Tim Donnelly's dead an' they're havin' a wake,
An' the world's rich in joy! and it's only me's poor,
Since Katie and me a'n't ingaged anny moor.

She was always that modest and swate. Oi declare She wud blush full as rid as her illigant hair At the t'ought of another man stalin' the taste Of her lips, or another man's arrum 'round her waist.



An' now—och, McCarney, luk out, or Oi'll break Yer carcass in fragmints an' dance at yer wake, As you're dancin' at Donnelly's! What shud Oi fear? Purgatory? Not mooch, fer the same is right here. Wid me heart on the briler, an' niver a cure, Since Katie and me a'n't ingaged anny moor.



DAT GAWGY WATAHMILLON.

O, DAT Gawgy watahmillon, an' dat gal ob Gawgy wif 'm!

She foun' 'm an' she poun' 'm an' he ripe enough to lif 'm.

I tote 'm to de well an' den we cool 'm in de watah, An' we bress de Lawd foh libin', like a Gawgy niggah ought to.

She pat him an' she punk him, like ol' mammy wif de chillun,

An' ma haht it done keep punkin' ev'y time she punk de millón!

I look into huh yalla eyes an' feel dat I can trus' 'm, An' den I take de millon an' I drop 'm down an' bus' 'm.

O, dat Gawgy watahmillon wif de sweet an' coolin' flowin'!

Poke youah face deep down, ma honey, an' jes' keep youah mouf a-goin'.

Dar ain't no use ob talkin', but I 'clar to Gord I'se willin'

Foh to nebeh hab no heab'n 'cept dat Gawgy gal an' millon!

Foh dey filled de haht an' stomach ob dis happy Gawgy niggah,

An' he couldn' be no fullah, 'less de Lohd done make him biggah.

(91)



Lohdy, Lohd! I'se done been dreamin' an' my haht is mos' a-breakin',

An' ma lips dey is a-burnin' an' ma stomach is a achin'.

I been dreamin' ob de summah an' ma mouf is jes' a-fillin'

Foh dat honey gal ob Gawgy an' dat Gawgy watahmillon!



NATHAN'S FLAT.

N ATHAN wrote that he 'n' his wife was livin' in a flat.

"Gracious me!" says mother, "why, what sort o' place is that?"

"Well," I says, "it's one o' them there places, don't you know,

'At folks live in, likely," an' mother says, "Jesso!"
But 'bout a half hour later, she broke out, "I'd give
a cent

If I could sort o' puzzle out what Nathan really meant."

Now, ain't that like a woman? You can tell 'em what is what;

You can show 'em plain as preachin', but it's just as like as not

When ye've argied an' convinced 'em an' yeh think ye've surely fetched 'em,

They'll bust out just where they started, same as though yeh hadn't teched 'em.

"Well," I says, "we'll go to see 'em, then, an' that'll stop yer clatter,"

For I own that I was cur'ous like, myself, about the matter!

So we went an' Nathan met us. Wa'n't we glad to see his face!

An' he rid us on a cable till we reached a stoppin' place,

(93)



An' says, "Here we are!" an' first I knowed I was a-standin' there

A-gawpin' at a buildin' that was higher in the air Than the Presbyterian steeple. An' I says, "My conscience, Nat,

It can't be sech a stuck-up thing is what yeh call a flat?"

But he only smiled an' nodded an' he took us in the hall,

An' mother says, "Why, Nathan, dew yeh occipy it all?"

Then we got into a little coop, an' Nathan he says "Seven!"

An' in another second we was shootin' up to heaven.

Mother shet her teeth an' helt her breath an' trembled 'roun' the eyes,

An' my heart fell in my stomach, it was sech a sudden rise.

Then, in another jiffy, we was into Nathan's flat—Six rooms, about the size o' three, an' darn small three at that.

But some things was pretty handy. They was places in the wall

Where ye'd go an' talk to people 'at yeh couldn't see at all.

There was one place where ye'd turn a wheel to squirt a little heat,

An' the cellar was a little box containin' things to eat. (94)



Then there was one extravygance 'at mother thought a sin;

They had spiled a good-sized clo'se-press fer to put a bath-tub in.

Gee! it made me think o' tombstones, it was all so white and shiny,

But mother she peeked into it an' says "I vum; it's chiny!"

Nathan's wife was kind o' laughin', so I fixed my eyes on her,

An' says, solemn, "Read yer Bible of the whited sepulchre!

"Bath-tubs! Why, if I'd a mind to, I could tell yeh pretty quick

Of the time when Nathan's bath-tub was the hull o' Simpson's creek!

An' the sunshine was his only towel, or if by any chance,

He couldn't wait fer dryin', why he used his coat an' pants.

An' on Sat'dy nights in winter, mother'd fetch the washin'-tub,

An' she'd heat enough of water fer all han's to take a scrub.

An' she'd pester Nat, 'Git ready!' till at last he'd sort o' squeak,

'Ma, I honest don't believe I hardly need a bath this week!'



But she'd shet him in the kitchen, an' he'd grunt an' puff an' spatter,

Till you'd thought a steamboat bust-up was the least could be the matter."

"Yes, an' then I'd mop," says mother, "an' blow out the kitchen light,

An' I'd foller Nat upstairs to kiss my little boy 'Good night!'

An' it kind o' seemed that me an' God was watchin' there by Nat,

But I don't believe I'd ever have sech feelin's in a flat!"



"OUR CLUB."—THE IRISH MEMBER'S TOAST.

THE sharp edge of hunger was turned and the Chair

Arose to inform us we all might prepare

For a story, a toast, or any good bit

Which entered the head of an owner of wit,

And for fear Brother Milliken's tongue should grow

balky.

By mixing Kentucky with part of Milwaukee, We'd hear from him first, and his toast was "Our Club."

As soon as his fellows had laughed at the rub Which the chairman had given the Irishman rose, Upholding his liquid, and said, "I suppose Ivry mother's gossoon of ye's achin' to drink The toast to our club, so let yer bowls clink! Yez can drink it in potcheen or drink it in watter, An', barrin' the taste, I would say, drink the latter; Fer if yez do not, I will give ye fair warnin', Ye'll find that it's watter ye want in the marnin'. But drink watter now an' ye'll feel extry foine An' won't be a-wantin' a hat noomber noine, Fer I'll tell ye the trut'—to the shame of the divil—It don't do to treat the potcheen over civil.



Just as sure as ye open yer door to the cratur,
He hints that his brother is finer or nater,
An' then they both say that their coosin is swater,
An' then that the family should be more complater,
An' they have a gay toime an' ye find, to yer sorra,
Though ye'll swear they were lodged in yer
stomach, begorra,

Yet all of e'm's oop in yer head, by tomorra!

"But drink to our club in what liquid ye wish;
Drink deep as a camel and free as a fish.
Though we call it a club, let that club be a staff!
Let it always be used in a brother's behalf—
A support for his need and a rest for his hand!
Though we call it a club, let that club be a wand!—
The same as thim wands that the fairies used much.
Let no heart be so hard but to melt at its touch!
As we call it a club, when we see anny wrang,
Let us take up our club an' go after it strang;
Let it swing for the right, brothers, nightly and
daily,

Though we call it a club, let it be a shillaly!"



"OUR LADIES."—THE POET'S TOAST.

A TOAST from the poet, I think, would be pleasant,"

Cried he at the banquet's head.
"A toast from the poet!" cried every one present,
And the poet arose and said:

"Mr. Chairman, I greet you and all of your host; My comrades, your friendship is ever my boast; And lastly, fair ladies, 'tis you whom I toast. Though I mention you last, it is not my intent To reckon you least. First in worth is not meant When we place the soft mollusk or thin consommé At the top of the menu, and no one will say The piece de resistance is less of a dish Just because further down on the list than the fish.

"Mother Eve, you remember, was last in formation, Which proves she was apex of all the creation, For first appeared grasses and herbs and the fruits, And then came the fishes, the fowls and the brutes, Then Adam; and mark you how each form grew higher.

But still there was left something more to desire, For though all life was there, flora, fauna and human.

Paradise could not be until also was woman.

(99)



And so she was made from a small, bony part
Which is nearest (please note well the symbol)
man's heart.

And hence, since that time, 'tis man's chiefest endeavor

To get back that rib, and 'twill be so forever.

"How broad is the theme of my toasting—Our Ladies!

Proud daughters of Guelph and the Misses O'Gradys,

The Fräulein of Berlin, the Donas of Cadiz, The Annas, the Fannies, the Adas, the Sadies, All, all, in some masculine hearts are 'Our Ladies.'

"Our Ladies? Our mothers, queen-angels of Earth.
Our wives, or our sweethearts—tongue fails at your worth!

O, is there a grief which o'ershadows the day
Which by woman's soft breath is not wafted away?
O, is there a heart, adamantine, austere,
Which melts not beneath a pure, womanly tear?
And what soured ascetic who does not rejoice
In the grace of her glance, of her smile, of her voice?

"O, have you an armor, so tempered, so true,
That a woman's sharp tongue cannot pierce through
and through?

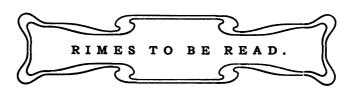
(100)



And tell me of arguments, reasons or laws, Which bear half of the weight of a woman's 'Because.'

"Our Ladies, enduring, considerate, meek; Our Ladies, contrary, irrational, weak; Kind hearted, yet cruel; obliging, perverse, Which is why they are taken 'for better or worse.'

"Do you think the description is rather complex? So it is, but just so is the feminine sex; Yet without the sex, Heaven itself were a Hades, For Heaven is anywhere where are Our Ladies."



AFTER-DINNER APOLOGY OF LE COMTE CRAPAUD.

I VOULD you make ze little speak avec plaisir,
Boat et ess not moach long zat I been here,
Ant I am timid zat I speak soam wrong,
Becos I know zis langvids not moach long.

"Zis Englees langvids I not understand me moach. Eet ees not logical, eef I can jodge, For eet ees not long since I am invite Au Chi-ca-go to see ze many sight.

Ant zere I fint I alvays spoke ze vay I do not spoke to spoke ze vhat I say.

Zey to me show ze building high, high, high!

Zey call him, voila! scraper-of-ze-sky.

I look oapon ze mud down at ze street

Ant wish zey had ze scraper-of-ze-street.

"Zey take me to ze yard vhere ees ze stock—
Ze peeg—ten tousan' tousan' peeg—vat you call
'hock!'

Zat night at a re-cep-se-ong, zey to me say,
'Ant how you like Chi-ca-go zees fairst day?'
I say 'Oh, magnifique! I not can like it more;
I never meet so many hock in all my life before!'
But zen I fint I have not spoke ze vay
I ought to spoke to spoke ze vhat I say.

(102)



"Zen some one speak about ze trust ant I say out,
'Vhat ees zees trust I hear so moach about?'
Zey say eet ees a com-bin-a-se-ong of ze stock.
'Stock? stock?' I say. 'Zen ees ze trust more
"hock!"'

Zey say zat I have right ant zen zey roar,
Ant ah! I fint I am a zhoke once more.
I fint zere ees a trust in zees—in zat,
Trust in ze shoe down here, oap in ze hat,
A trust in vhat you eat, you drink, you wear,
A trust in eferyzing ant eferyvhere!
By gar, I meet a man zat have a vife—
La plus jolie I ever see in all my life.
Zat genteel man he say, he tells me, sir,
He have a trust, a pairfect trust—in her!
Trust in hees vife! ma foi! I am so shock!
Ant zen I ask vhat he will take for all ze stock.
But ah! I find he have not spoke ze vay
He ought to spoke to spoke ze vat he say.

"For eet ees soach a fonny langvids, oui!
Not long ago, one evening, coam to me
One ver' good friend, as eet ees getting dark
Ant say, 'Coam, let us go upon ze lark,'
I say 'Eh bien, I go,' for I not like to tell
Zat I not understand him ver' moach well.
A lark? Zat ees a bird, selon Webstaire,
Ze gentilman zat write ze dictionaire;
Boat, ah! I fint I haf not understood.
I fint zis lark ees not a bird moach good.

(103)



"Eet ees ver' late zat I am get to bed
Ant zen I feel so strange oap in ze head.
I am so bad I not can sleep, ant so
I rise moach early ant I go below;
Ant zere I fint ze hotel-clerk who coam ant say
'Monsieur, you get oap wiz ze lark to-day!'
I say 'Non, non, madame; oh, my poor head!
Eet ees wiz zat bad bird I went to bed!
I not get oap wiz him. You are moach wrong;
I am alreaty wiz zat bird too long.'

"He laugh so moach I seenk his face ees break; I not know why onless I speak meestake; Ant so, I will not make ze speak to-night, For I am timid zat I not speak right."



"THE OTHER ONE WAS BOOTH."

(Suggested by conversations with certain "retired" actors.)

NOW, by the rood, as Hamlet says, it grieves me sore to say

The stage is not as once it was, when I was wont to play;

'Tis true Hank Irving, dear old chap, still gives a decent show,

And Mansfield and Ed Willard really act the best they know;

'Tis true that Duse and Bernhardt, for we mustn't be too hard,

Are very fair (for women) though of course they ought to guard

Against some bad-art tendencies; but as for all the

There's hardly one, I may say none, who stands the artist's test.

True artists are a rare, rare breed; there were but two, forsooth,

In all me time, the stage's prime; and the other one was Booth.

"Why, Mac—I mean Macready—but we always called him Mac,

And old Ned Forrest used to say, or so they once told Jack;

(105)



Or, that is, Jack McCullough, that—well, this is what they said;

'There were but two who really knew how Shakespeare should be read.'

They didn't mean the younger Kean, or Jack; and so perhaps

It caused a little jealousy among the lesser chaps.

They said that Larry Barrett was entitled to respect.

But as for Tom Salvini, well, his dago dialect Would never do for Shakespeare; so to tell the sim-

Would never do for Shakespeare; so to tell the simple truth,

There were only two men in it; and the other one was Booth.

"Don't think conceit is in me tongue; 'tis something I detest;

But I may say that in me day I've figured with the best.

Why, Kalamazoo, and Oshkosh, too, and Kankakee as well.

Went fairly wild, nor man, nor child, stirred when the curtain fell.

The S. R. O. was hung each night; our show was such a rage

They took the ushers off the floor and ushered from the stage.

From Buzzard's Bay to San José, from Nawrleans to Duluth,

Just two stars hit a little bit; and the other one was Booth. (106)



"I liked Ned Booth, for he was such a royal-hearted fellow,

We never had a jealousy. When he put on Othello His Iago was much like to mine, likewise his stage direction;

But what cared Ed. what critics said, since I made no objection?

Ah, me! That day is past; the play has lost its honored station;

Who reads aright rage, sorrow, fright, or tragic desolation?

Aye, who can reach to Hamlet's speech, "To be or not to be?"

Or wild Macbeth's cry, 'Never shake thy gory locks at me!'

Or Lear's appeal: 'O, let me not be mad, sweet Heavens, not mad!'

Or Shylock's rage: 'I'll have me bond!' Ah, me; it makes me sad

To think it all, and then recall the drama of me youth,

When there were two who read lines true; and the other one was Booth."

(107)



GOING HOME TO MOTHER.

I T was fifty years ago, and one day we
Had et our dinner by a big oak tree.
(I often wonder if that tree still stands,
It's green arms beckonin' to tired farm-hands.)
It wa'n't quite time to go to work again,
When one young chap he jumps up quick and
then.—

"I'm a-goin' home to mother, boys," he said,
"Although she doesn't know it, an' perhaps she
thinks I'm dead.
I went away when I was young, y' see,

But now I'm over twenty and I got more sense,"
says he.

"I swear I don't know why I went," he says. "Somehow,

The very strongest reasons then seem mighty foolish now.

Some thoughtless word I said stirred up the brine; I s'pose no mother never loved a son much more'n mine,"

He said, "and every least word hurt. What fools we are

To never learn the careless cut may leave the deepest scar!

(108)



"But now I'm goin' home again," he said.

"I'm like the prodigal and tired of husks instead of bread.

I'll tell her I was wrong!—and bless her! she was human.

O, yes, I know; I said 'twas no use talkin' to an angry woman,

But Lord! a woman might be 'woman' to another, But to her boy she oughtn't to be anything but mother.

"An' so I'm goin' home again," he said.

"My shoulder is just achin' for the pressure of her head.

My lips are fixed to show her what is what,

And these arms will soon convince her how long and strong they've got.

"You can laugh, boys, if you want," the youngster said,

His lips a-pressin' tighter and a firmness to his head.

But there wasn't any laughin'. When you look deep down a heart

An' see its noblest feelin's, 'tisn't laughter that'll start.

"But here's for home and mother, boys!" he said,
And he went. God help him! for he found his
mother dead.

(109)



She had died—died callin' for him, and her breast Never knew whose stricken head sunk there to rest.

"I'm a-goin' home to mother," he had said,

But O, the mighty difference when the lovin' lips are dead;

A coffin is an awful thing for a fellow's last embrace,

And your hottest tears can never warm that cold 'nd quiet face.

Crying, ain't I? But that boy was me. That mother was my own,

And though it's years and years ago, since I was left alone,

Still, I think of her at midnight, and I dream of her at noon,

For I'm goin' home to mother pretty soon, nowpretty soon.



A COURTIN' CALL.

HIM!

HE dressed hisself from top t' toe T' beat the lates' fash'n. He gave his boots a extry glow, His dicky glistered like the snow, He slicked his hair exactly so. An' all t' indicate "his pash'n." He tried his hull three ties afore He kep' the one on that he wore.

HER!

All afternoon she laid abed To make her featchurs brighter. She tried on ev'ry geoun she hed, She rasped her nails until they bled, A dozen times she frizzed her head An' put on stuff to make her whiter, An' fussed till she'd 'a' cried, she said But that 'ld make her eyes so red.

THEM!

They sot together in the dark 'Ithout a light, excep' their spark, An' neither could have told er guessed What way the t'other un was dressed. (111)



RIP VAN WINKLE.

FONDER of Schnapps and Schneider than of right,

A shiftless, thriftless, rude, unlettered log

Who wallowed in a slimy, drunken bog;

Well-meaning and ill-acting; appetite

As dry as was his wit; a jolly wight

With follies to exhaust the catalogue;

Weak-willed, good-tempered, sinful and contrite,

Without one element of manly might,

Save that the children loved him—and his dog.

And yet he makes the laughter-laden lip Turn to a tremble, while the hot tears flow; Then mock its own emotion by some slip To sudden mirth, because we love him so; For human weakness in the rascal, Rip, Becomes a humane strength in actor Joe.

Home-Made Philosophy.





A MULE OF ARKANSAS.

THOU patient, plodding piece of bone and flesh!
Thou sentient something, tangled in a mesh
Of fatal being! I could weep for thee,
But thou, thou couldst as surely weep for me.

Not knowing why nor whither I am driven, To me the urging lash is likewise given; Hitched to this drag of life, I may not falter, Nor wander past the pull of rein or halter.

Poor thou, poor I! yet, comrade, were we free, The world might lose the little we may be. Along this straitened path, perhaps 'tis best, We may not linger and we dare not rest.



THE BEAST AND HIS BURDEN.

RESH from his valet, breathing forth perfume,
Swathed in the softest product of the loom,
Full-fed and arrogant, the beggar rode
And cursed the laboring beast which he bestrode.
A pleasant beggar he, who asked mere mites,
Such as Possession of the Public Rights,
Franchises, Rights of Way, and title deeds
To profit by our children's children's needs.

Another leaped upon the laboring beast
Which faltered as he felt the load increased.
The beggar burned with wrath, but found relief
To see it was his trusted friend, the thief,
A man to scale a Congress, tie the hands
And gag the tongues, while forcing his demands
For booty and for bounty. Yet so wise
A cracksman he, he puts it in the guise
Of benefit to others, so that we
Snatch off our hats to him and bow the knee.

But now the beast, by some strange impulse fired, Cried out: "Get off my back, for I am tired. I want to roll upon the earth. I need To rest a little and I want more feed." "Beast!" cried the beggar, striking with his goad, "We only ride to keep you in the road. Did we not ride and feed you, you would wander And starve to death out in the grasses yonder."



"Ass!" cried the thief, "are you too blind to see,
"Tis not your vulgar strength which carries me,
But I support you by this tight-drawn rein?
And I am almost weary of the strain,
So if you hint again you want to stop,
I swear I'll loose the rein and let you drop."
The laboring beast cried out in great alarm
And prayed the thief to keep a steady arm.
And still he keeps his patient, weary stride,
And still the thief and beggar calmly ride.



A PRICELESS PARADISE.

If some weird gnome should seek my home,
Some genie, fairy, witch,
To blink my eyes with every prize
Of life, and ask me "Which?"
I think I'd choose, in half a trice,
This boon: to never ask the price.

I would not claim a gilded name,
Or be a financier,
Nor would I hold the wide world's gold;
And yet I somewhat fear
I'd ask a just sufficient slice
That I might never ask the price.

A coat-of-arms has meager charms
To men of modern views,
Yet were it mine to make design,
I know which one I'd choose:
An open purse, with this device,
"He never, never asks the price."

Is Heaven a state, a place, a fête,
A rapture, or a rest?
The question's old and each may hold
His own opinion best;
But my idea of Paradise
Is where one need not ask the price!

(118)



GRANDMOTHER'S SONG.

RANDMOTHER'S voice was always mild,
And at everyday troubles she always smiled;
For she used to say

From sne used to say Frowns didn't pay,

As she had learned when the merest child. So whenever we cried for a fancied wrong, Grandmother used to sing this song:

"To-day, to-day,

Let's all be gay;

To-morrow

We may sorrow.

My dear, don't fret

For what's not yet;

For you make a trouble double when you borrow."

Ah me! 'tis many a lonesome year Since grandmother's song has reached my ear;

And I sigh my sigh

For the days gone by,

For you went with them, grandmother dear. But I still have left your quaint old song,

And I shall sing it and pass along:

"To-day, to-day,

Let's all be gay;

To-morrow

We may sorrow.

My dear, don't fret

For what's not yet;

For you make a trouble double when you borrow."
(119)



THE DEAR LITTLE FOOL.

E ACH man is a master in a school—
Heigh ho, my deary!

Where he trains himself to be a fool—
Folly is so cheery.

And he trains him well and he trains him long,
He trains him true and he trains him strong;

And this is the burden of my song—
Wit and wisdom weary.

The man finds out that he's a fool—
Heigh ho, my deary!

And puts himself on the dunce's stool—
Folly grows a-weary.

And he says to himself, "You beast, you worm!
You're the biggest fool I've had this term."

And he laughs to see the poor fool squirm—
Wisdom is so cheery.

He sets down many a sapient rule—

Heigh ho, my deary!

For the future course of the wretched fool—

Folly is so weary.

And the poor little fool, he says: "Ah, me!

That I was a fool I plainly see,

But never again such a fool I'll be!"—

Wisdom is so cheery.

(120)



The man and the fool they live along—
Heigh ho, my deary!

Till the man is weak and the fool is strong—
Folly is so cheery.

And the little fool says: "Oh, master dear,
This never is long, and the world is drear!

Let me loose! let me loose, and have no fear!"

Wit and wisdom weary.

The dear little fool, he has his way—
Folly is so cheery!

The good man laughs that the fool is gay—
Wit and wisdom weary;

Till he finds that the fool is really he,
And the stronger the fool the worse when free,
And again he groans, "Ah, woe is me!"—
Heigh ho, my deary!



THE MINOR ROLE.

OFT have you seen a star upon the stage
Uttering his transports of despair or rage,
Until the whole house wondered at his skill
And thundered plaudits with a hearty will.
But did you note that other player there
Who watched the leading actor's mock despair,
Who had no line to speak, or work to do,
Yet who was there to make the background true;
Whose every thought must aid (as each might mar)
The bright effulgence of the flaming star?
And did you stop to think his thankless part
Of doing nothing took the greater art?

'Tis so in life. We oftentimes admire
The man whom nothing seems to daunt or tire,
Whose energies are like battalions hurled
Against his foe (and audience!) the world.
You hardly note that other actor there,
That woman of his household—and his care,
Who can do nothing more, nor would do less,
Than live the background of his life's success—
A waiting, watching, suffering, silent soul,
Without the outlet of a leading role.
And sure am I her patient, minor part,
Doomed to do nothing, takes the greater heart.

(122)



PANACEA.

IT'S no great oddity
That one commodity
Has such demand
Throughout the land.
You know what it is, I think. Ah yes,
It is nothing more and nothing less
Than a double X brand of happiness.

Now think what a place this world would be, What a jolly old place for you and me, What a wonderful place if you and I Would only try

To meet the demand with a certain supply.

Consider, my son,

How easily done,

To make one happy, only one;

A father, mother,

Sister, brother,

Or if they be supplied, why then some other.

And, my daughter, see How well 'twould be. Why, the thing is as plain as A B C! If each of us were engaged in keeping One happy soul from dawn to sleeping,

(123)



If each of us were busy in making
One soul peaceful from dusk to waking.
What a happy old place this world would be,
What a jolly old place for you and me!

And if every one else then did the same, Why wouldn't it be the cleverest game? But, pray, don't try To oversupply Somebody already floating high. 'Tis the sinking wretch we need to save, And not the one on the topmost wave. And remember, too, This much—that you And I will profit by what we do. 'Tis a curious fact, but past all doubt, That the more of happiness one gives out The more he has left and the more his powers. As the gardener strips a bed of flowers That more shall bloom, so strip your soul That another's happiness be made whole. And lo! in the quick-winged second after, 'Tis filled with the blooms of love and laughter.



BUT O, BOYS, KNOW, BOYS.

THERE'S a certain sort of pleasure in a mingling with the boys,

In keeping up your end of it and adding to the noise

With

"Fill the cup

And lift it up

To every gallant soul of us. Drink! drink, my men, and come again! the devil

guards the whole of us!"

There's a pleasing palpitation to the liquid of the jugs,

As it mingles with the music of the clinking of the mugs:

There's a pretty, pleasing popping,

When the bottles are unstopping,

And a fizzy fascination carries folly to its height.

But O, boys,

Know, boys-

That folly has its flight,

And a greater fascination

Is a healthy, clean sensation

That your brain is still in session and your eye is clear and bright,

When the time comes for waking in the morning.



There's a certain sort of pleasure in the gayety of girls,

In the pat of pretty fingers, in the brush of beauty's curls,

With

"Here's a glass

To any lass

Who offers tempting lips to us! The night is kind, the world is blind, so who can debit slips to us?"

There's a certain fascination in the giddiness of guile,

There's a certain strange temptation in the wickedness of wile,

When the wicked wit is dashing

And the wicked smiles are flashing,

So if all the world be wicked, is our wickedness amiss?

But O, boys,

Know, boys-

There comes an end to this

And a higher fascination,

And a wholesomer sensation,

Is to realize your lips are clean and worthy of the

Of a sweetheart, wife, or mother in the morning.

(126)



A HITCH BEHIND.

SEE them there boys a-crawlin'
Up that long hill and haulin'
Their sleds? A-slippin', fallin',
A-puffin', laughin', bawlin'?
And see those others shootin' down the slope
Slicker than greased eels in a barrel o' soap?
And down upon the level there, you'll find
A batch of fellers of a different kind,
Jest nacherally waitin' fer a hitch behind.

Crawlin' up hill is work. An' you soon learn That all you git fer work you more than earn. O' course sometimes one of the strongest chaps May have the easiest sled to pull, perhaps. An' then, again, you'll see some heavy bob Behind a kid too little fer the job, But still he plugs ahead, not bein' the kind To stand 'round waitin' fer a hitch behind.

An' slidin' down is spendin'. Once your sled Gits on the slope and finds it has its head, There ain't no use a-diggin' in your toes. A sled was made to go an' blame! She goes. Same way with money, 'ceptin' it's the kind That gits its motion from a hitch behind.

(127)



Fer hitch-behinders are two sorts. Some's so allfired

Lazy they won't climb. They'll be too tired To chase the hitches up when hitches come, 'Ceptin' they're ice-wagons. Then there's some That let the workin'-wagons go, and hitch Onto the double-bob "The Public," which Is drawed by two old plugs called You and Me, And drove by Uncle Sammy. Some day, he May git a cure fer bein' deaf and blind And swing his black-snake at them kids behind.

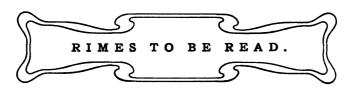
(128)



A WATCHWORD.

W HEN you find a certain lack
In the stiffness of your back
At a threatened fierce attack,
Just the hour
That you need your every power,
Look a bit
For a thought to baffle it.
Just recall that every knave,
Every coward, can be brave
Till the time
That his courage should be prime—
Then 't is fled.
Keep your head!
What a folly 't is to lose it
Just the time you want to use it!

When the ghost of some old shirk
Comes to plague you, and to lurk
In your study or your work,
Here 's a hit
Like enough will settle it.
Knowledge is a worthy prize;
Knowledge comes to him who tries—
Whose endeavor
Ceases never.
Everybody would be wise
As his neighbor,
Were it not that they who labor,
(129)



For the trophy creep, creep, creep, While the others lag or sleep;
And the sun comes up some day
To behold one on his way
Past the goal
Which the soul
Of another has desired,
But whose motto was, "I 'm tired."

When the task of keeping guard Of your heart-Keeping weary watch and ward Of the part You are called upon to play Every day-Is becoming dry and hard,— Conscience languid, virtue irksome, Good behavior growing worksome,-Think this thought: Doubtless everybody could, Doubtless everybody would, Be superlatively good, Were it not That it 's harder keeping straight Than it is to deviate; And to keep the way of right, You must have the pluck to fight.

(130)



THE REFORMER.

KNOW a philosopher, learned and read, Who, in viewing the world, seems to stand on his head,

He pities the poor and goes in for reform, Convinced he can keep the world comfy and warm, If he keeps the thermometer out of the storm.

Having heard how the ostrich has cleverly planned To hide by concealing his head in the sand, He holds that a scheme would be valid and wise To protect it forever from hunt and surprise By catching the ostrich and searing its eyes.

He marvels that men should so bargain and dicker To be governed at last by an imbecile ticker, So he has invented one, run by a clock; Set fast, it will "boost," or set slow, it will "knock," And thus you can bull or can bear any stock.

In elections he claims that the office should go Not to him with the high vote, but him with the low.

To be voted unpopular surely is tough, So the office should go to console the rebuff, While the man who succeeds is rewarded enough.

He holds that a criminal ought to do time Before, and not after, committing the crime.

(131)



"Plain drunk" would be given a month to be fitted; Ten years and a burglary might be permitted; While murderers first would be hung, then acquitted.

You laugh at this mortal? I laugh at him, too; He reminds me so much of myself—and of you. Oh, I'm sure the world's sick and it needs a physician,

But if I be the doctor to fill the position, The fee curing me cures the patient's condition!



"HONOR."

PACK of dogs were sunning and napping, Well-fed, satisfied, glad dogs; Suddenly, up sprang, snarling and snapping, Ill-bred, villified, mad dogs. Some one had flung them a musty bone, And the chorus cried, "It is mine; my own." "'Tis mine, I claim, for I saw it first." "'Tis mine, say I, for I need it worst." Quarreling and snarling, they leaped to fight, Yowling and growling, their teeth snapped tight, Till each had lost of his quivering flesh More meat than the bone had held when fresh! They rolled themselves in the muck and mud: They lost their bone and they lost their blood. But on they fought, for, be it known, It is doggish honor to fight for a bone.

A goose flew into a neighbor's yard And left an egg as a calling card.
"The egg is mine, for my goose made it."
"Tis mine, for on my land she laid it."
A look, a word, a threat, a wrangle,
A suit at law, a legal tangle,
Decision, dissent, appeal, reversal,
A re-appeal and a re-rehearsal,
The egg grew stale, the case grew rotten,
The goose was dead and long forgotten,

(133)



But still the antagonists litigated,
While the lawyers smiled and the judges prated,
Though all their driest lore, or juiciest,
Could not decide which goose was goosiest.
Yet still they fought, for, be it known,
"Tis a point of honor to "guard one's own."

The Powers of the Earth discussing whether They might not eternally dwell together With peace, good humor and good digestion, Were suddenly stirred by a grievous question. An egg, or a bone, produced the foment, Or, anyway, something of equal moment. "Tut! the question is one of the merest trifles. (We'll rush our order for newer rifles.") "Dear cousin of ours, we are more than brothers, (Have you noticed our navy? There are no others.")

"Good friend, our affection is deep and holy.
(Do you think these guns are ornaments solely?")
O, dogs will be dogs when they come to a bone,
And men may be geese, as a goose has shown,
And it's national "honor" to go to war
Over something that isn't worth fighting for!



DEAR MOTHER EARTH.

DEAR Mother Earth, full oft I long
To sing thy praises in a song;
I ache to lay me down to rest
Somewhere upon thy yielding breast,
To turn my pavement-wearied feet
Beyond the seeming endless street,
And seek some dimpled country place,
Half cool, half warm, for thy embrace;
Then kiss thee, prone upon my face,
Dear Mother Earth!

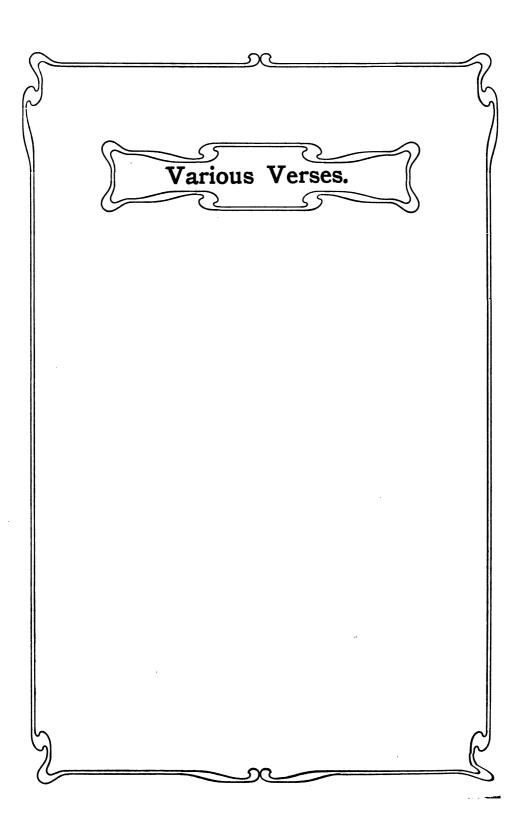
Like old Antaeus long ago,
Whose strength surged up from earth below,
I feel there is a peace in thee,
Which thou dost whisper unto me,
When thus I press thee, cheek to cheek.
Thou art so strong and I so weak;
And some time there shall come a day
When tender, trembling hands shall lay
Me deep, to mingle with thy clay,
Dear Mother Earth!

Thy gift to me shall come to thee, And as thou art, so shall I be. I owe thee all, and so must try To make thee better ere I die; And as we twain are one, I see To better self may better thee.

(135)



And so I rise from thy embrace Revived, and with a hopeful grace, Thus having met thee face to face, Dear Mother Earth!







DOMESTICATED GENIUS.

I AM not up on artist's gush;
I can't "improve the rose's flush,"
Nor yet "so paint the woodland thrush
That one may hear it sing;"
But let me own without a blush,
I swing a very pretty brush
On window screens in spring.

I own I've no desire to meet
A foreign foe, in field, or fleet;
I'm free to say I might retreat,
If I were left on guard;
Yet many a man might find defeat,
If matched against me, as I beat
The rugs in our back yard.

I seldom seek a grassy ground
And seize a shinny-stick to pound
A marble from a little mound
In token of my power;
Far greater glory I have found,
For I can push the mower 'round
Our lawn in just one hour.

I'm not familiar with the gear Of touring cars. I could not steer The catapult on its career

(139)



And dodge the rut and rock;
But you would own I've scarce a peer,
If you should see me engineer
The go-cart 'round the block.

I'm not of those who "fought and bled;"
My fame has never widely spread;
My qualities of heart and head
Are very often doubted;
But o'er my bones let this be said—
That I've fixed up an onion bed,
And, Heaven be praised! it's sprouted.



THE SIGNS OF THE ZODIAC.

(A Modern Interpretation.)

SAGITTARIUS. Otherwise Cupid, in a thin disguise.

Virgo, the maiden. She and I Trot to altar. Happy? My!

Libra. First designs of Fate; Grocer fails to give full weight.

Taurus. Increased dangers lurk. Beef trust now begins to work.

Aries. Fails to bring relief; Mutton follows price of beef.

Pisces. Fish trust. Itching fin. Finds my pocket. Thrusts it in.

Aquarius. Water turned to ice Stiffens. Also does the price.

Scorpio. Hot stuff. That means coal; What! up higher? Bless my soul!

Leo. Though I make a roar, Things go up a little more. (141)



Capricornus. Try to buck
Tiger. Cleaned out. Wretched luck.

Gemini. Anxious hours on pins; Nurse comes in and—Heavens, twins!

Cancer the crab. What's crab? O, yes, Meaning a lobster—me, I guess.



THE LOVE OF COUNTRY.

(As It Too Often Is At Present.)

D EEP in the heart of every man the love of country lies;

He breathes it with his baby breath; it lingers till he dies.

So I love the land we live in, every tittle, every jot, With a preferential feeling for a Broadway corner lot.

I love the boundless country, with its harvest, and I sigh

To manipulate a corner of the visible supply.

I love the lofty mountains, and I feel my heart will burst,

Knowing I might own their treasure, had I only found it first.

And not alone our country and its greatness I revere,

But I hold the very emblems of its privileges dear.

Methinks the goddess Liberty would touch a heart
of flint,

So beautifully stamped upon the product of the mint!

(143)



And I linger o'er the Latin graven on the coin's reverse,

Wishing that I had a "pluribus" of "unums" in my purse.

I love the spreading eagle with the lightning in its clutch,

And I love the double eagle just precisely twice as much!

Then the patriots and the sages—that long and noble line—

I would that a collection of their likenesses were mine!

I love the Grant and Lincoln on the crisp or crumpled "one,"

And on the "two" I cherish the immortal Washington.

I love the Franklin on the "ten," the Garfield on the "five."

And I love the noble red man better there than if alive.

The hero on the "twenty," too, is strangely dear to me.

But who he is, alas! I seldom have a chance to see.

Yes, I honor all the heroes who are turned to common clay,

And my soul is filled with gratitude—I'm not as dead as they.

(144)



Yet while they lived they nobly launched our glorious Ship of State;

And I wish I had the contract to supply her armorplate.

"In God we trust" they placed upon our coinage, which is why

In man we will not trust unless he has a good supply.

From bonds of foreign tyranny they bravely set us free,

And bonds of Uncle Sam are good enough for you and me.



AT A RAILROAD JUNCTION.

At slow and woful Junction Town,
Where devils laugh and angels frown
To see a traveler set down;
Where trains run only with a view
To help a restaurant or two;
Where rusty rails and barren boards
Are all the point of view affords.
But O, the barren board of all
Is that within that eating-stall!
Yes, stall, I said, and well deserved
The name! where beastly feed is served.
And so I say without compunction
My curses on this Railroad Junction.

What shall I do at Junction Town? At drear and weary Junction Town? The martyr's cross without the crown Awaits the stranger here set down.

O, one may wait and wait and wait,
Or one may rail against his fate,
Or eyes and ears may strain and strain,
As later, later grows the train,
The while the lagging minutes mock
His witless watching of the clock;
Or one may watch the station clerk
Performing his relentless work.

(146)



O, wretched man, of wretched function, Existing at this Railroad Junction!

God's pity on this Junction Town,
This dead and dreadful Junction Town!
O, what nepenthe-well can drown
The cares of travelers here set down.
The thought may give some passing cheer
One may escape within a year,
Or else the sentence be commuted
And only death be executed!
And if 't be so, I only pray
There be no Resurrection Day,
For think of Gabriel coming down
And finding one at Junction Town!
And so I say, with fervent unction,
God's pity on this Railroad Junction!



THE WOMAN WITH THE POT O' PAINT

N OW rises up the woman with a purpose in her face

And "touches up" the various belongings of the place.

A red is on her shoulder where she slid her sleeve on high,

A yellow on her temple where she tried to wipe her eye;

The baby's face is waffled where it went against the screen,

And papa's Sunday trousers have a seat of vivid green,

But the woman with the pot o' paint, unconscious of her blame,

Still "touches up" the various belongings just the same.

Not hers the languid landscape, or monotonous marine,

Not hers the china set bedaubed with giddy gold and green,

Not hers the "chrome" and "lake" from out a tube of squeezy lead,

Upon a palette daubed and with a mouse's whisker spread.

Nay, nay, the can of color of an honest primal hue, And hers, the brush as spreading as a horse's tail or two:

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Then pick her out a lonesome day and let her have full swing,

And the woman with the paint-pot is the terror of the spring.

O, Raphael was rapid and his genius was intense, But he couldn't put more paint than could the woman on a fence,

And cunning was the coloring of Titian and his brush,

But the colors of the woman would have put him to the blush.

Michael Angelo was noted for his daring, it is said, But did he ever dare to paint a china door-knob red? Bonheur could paint a powerful horse or gentlemanly cow,

But you ought to see the painted cat that's living with us now!



BLACK AND TAN.

MISS Barbara Black, a waxen blond,
Bemoans her visage, pale and wanned,
And strives by every plan
To compass her supreme desire,
Seen in her struggles to acquire
A coat of richest tan.

Miss Lily White, a "bright brunette,"
Disdains her locks of curly jet
And African descent.

True happiness she may not reach,
Because her hue will never bleach,
Say ninety-five per cent.

Now, if some scientific crack
Could bleach Miss White and tan Miss Black,
His fame would surely shine.
But, oh! suppose the learned man
Should equalize their black and tan
And lose the color line!



THE SUPERIOR VIEW.

Y ES, Plato's works were good, for he was clever in a way,

But they're hardly ever in the "six best sellers" of to-day:

And Shakespeare had a certain popularity, no doubt, But he hasn't published lately and I guess he's written out;

And as for Homer, really, don't you think he was a sham?

Why, it's doubtful if he ever even wrote a telegram.

Yes, Alexander's armies showed a certain sort of skill.

But his knowledge of artillery was pretty nearly nil.

Napoleon rode roughly over half a hemisphere,
But he never rode an auto in all of his career;
And Caesar was courageous in vicissitudes of war,
But he never had the fortitude to jump a trolleycar.

Yes, Paginini knew the way to swing a fiddle bow, But could he swing the voters of his precinct, do you know?

And Raphael could color with a very pretty touch, But his drawings never figured in the papers very much,

(151)



And Phidias could build a Parthenon in stately style,

But I'd rather have my money in a modern office pile.

Yes, Moses was a clever organizer for his date, But he never tried to organize a steamship syndicate:

And Socrates' philosophy has been esteemed sublime,

But he never asked for numbers that were "busy" all the time;

And as for Father Adam, why, whatever Eve would bake,

He never dared to hint of things his mother used to make!



THE ORGAN GRINDER.

HE stands outside my window in the street,
A humble minstrel of a dozen lays,
A memory of simpler, happier days.
Dear "Home, Sweet Home," and faithless "Marguerite,"

I did not know their music was so sweet; The "Washerwoman" and the "Marsellaise," I know not which should have my highest praise, Their very crudeness makes them so complete.

Weary of Wagner and his turgid notes,
Of florid Verdi's acrobatic throats,
I revel in this arm-delivered air,
Which whips a score of years from out my sight,
Refills me with a bubbling boy's delight,
And leaves me scant of pennies and of care.



OLIVER HAZARD PERRY.

COVE Two ships, two brigs, one schooner and one sloop."

His words charge down the years—a warlike group, Grim, gallant, glorious! All the flowers
Matured by summer suns and autumn showers
We use to deck the memory of that group,
Born of the times when banners rise or droop
In the harsh conflict of contending powers,

But look thou, Perry! gallant man and true! See'st thou that smoke of commerce, not of war? Rejoice with us that now no battles mar, And now there is no work for thee to do; No lookout's eye sights carnage from afar; No dismal red is mixed with Erie's blue.



THE THIRTY-THIRD DEGREE.

NOW every thing that Russell did, he did his best to hasten

And one day he decided that he'd like to be a Mason.

But nothing else would suit him and nothing less would please,

But he must take and all at once the thirty-three degrees!

Well, he rode the—oh, that is, he—really I can't tell.

You either mustn't know at all, or else know very well.

He dived into—well, never mind. It only need be said

That somewhere in the last degree, poor Russell dropped down dead!

They arrested all the Masons and they stayed in durance vile.

Till the jury found them "Guilty" when the judge said with a smile,

"I'm forced to let the prisoners go, for I can find," said he.

"No penalty for murder in the thirty-third degree!"



OTTO AND THE AUTO.

T IS strange how fashion makes us change the objects we admire;

We used to sing the tireless steed, but now the steedless tire.

So Otto bought an auto, so as not to be antique, But the thing was autocratic, as well as automatic, And the auto wouldn't auto as it ought to, so to speak.

He thought to hire an auto-operator for the work, And first he hired a circus-man and then he hired a Turk,

For he knew the circus-man drove fifty horses with success,

And if a man be shifty enough to manage fifty,

'Tis palpable enough he ought to manage one
horse-less!

As for the Turk, 'tis also plain, deny it if you can, He ought to run an auto, for a Turk's an Ottoman. 'Twas all in vain; so Otto moved to Alabama, purely That he might say, "I'm Otto from Mobile, and my motto:

'A Mobile Otto ought to run an automobile surely!'"

(156)



So Otto sought to auto on the auto as he ought to, But the auto sought to auto as Otto never thought to!

Then Otto he got hot, oh, very hot! as he ought not to,

And Otto said: "This auto ought to auto and it's got to!"

And Otto fought the auto and the auto it fought Otto,

Till the auto also got too hot to auto as it ought to, And then, Great Scott! that auto shot to heaven so did Otto—

Where Otto's auto autos now as Otto's auto ought



LENTEN PENITENCE.

(A la Mode.)

IN sack-cloth and ashes my lady prepares

To repent of her sins and to murmur her
prayers.

She is fond of her prayers, so her copies are bound. In harmony with her, however she's gowned, For she holds her Creator should never be faced. Except in mauve prayers with a lavender waist.

In sack-cloth and ashes she ponders afresh
On methods of penance to punish the flesh;
And what though she choose, for her piety's sake,
The vicarious flesh of a porterhouse steak?
"O Lord, be Thou merciful unto a sinner"
Who has fasted for hours and is faint for her dinner.

In sack-cloth and ashes, but if she prefer
That her sacque should be seal, should there be a
demur?

Prophet John wore a skin (and our climate is colder)

Which draped from the loins, as hers drapes from the shoulder.

And as for the ashes, well, they may be met Where they dusted the fur from her last cigaret!

(158)



COMEDY OR TRAGEDY?

(The Coquette, loquitur.)

And with my laughter waft your vows away;
For you, you say you love me, smile and sigh,
And fire me with the fervor of your eye.
Ah me, the pity of our mimic play!
If only either of us did not lie!



MY LOVER SAYS.

HE says I should not give a glance
To other men
But 'tis no gift, for, by some chance,
I'm sure to get one back again—
Or two, or ten;
Besides, I only look to see
If any of them look at me.

He says I ought to see as through
My lover's eyes;
But I reply that so I do,
For where he looks there I look too;
For I am wise,
And know that he must look—to see
If any of them look at me!



NOT A BIT SUPERSTITIOUS.

NO, I am not superstitious.
I consider it pernicious,
If not absolutely vicious
In a man

To admit himself so small that he must scan
Every little sign and omen
As the menace of a foeman.
Still, I'm free to say that Friday
Never, never would be my day
For a venture, for I'm sure 'twould never hit,
Though I am not superstitious, not a bit.

Really, I've no toleration
Of that nervous hesitation
And that irksome perturbation

Which I've seen,
When a dinner-party chanced to be thirteen.
Why,-I've seen that arrant folly
Make a whole crowd melancholy,
With their whining and their flimsy,
Foolish reasons for the whimsey.
Still, I own I hate to be the last to sit.
Though I am not superstitious, not a bit.

Certain things may be propitious,
Though they seem but adventitious,
And it's hardly superstitious
To perceive
Which is which, and so, accordingly, believe.

(161)



Now there's nothing makes me sadder Than to walk beneath a ladder; But I grow a good deal bolder When the moon is at my shoulder. And to spill the salt! It takes away my grit, Though I am not superstitious, not a bit.

Surely nothing can be clearer Than that evil marches nearer At the breaking of a mirror, And it's true

That a howling dog in night-time makes me blue,
For his keen scent makes no errors
And he smells the King of Terrors.
Here's another thing. Take heed, sir,
If your nose should start to bleed, sir,
And should only bleed three drops and then should
quit!

Though I am not superstitious, not a bit.

It is odd to see what uses
Some folks make of vain excuses
Rather than admit abuses
Of the mind.

When they're rather superstitiously inclined. Just to put it in plain English; It would seem they can't distinguish Between false and foolish cases And the few which have a basis In experience, which even I admit, Though I am not superstitious, not a whit!



THE ARMIES OF THE CORN.

R ANK upon rank they stood, and row on row; Plumed, tasseled, uniformed in green,
With rations in their knapsacked husks between
The myriad blades they brandished at the foe.

Long held the brave brigades and would not yield Till shattered by the destiny of War. Then (gallant tribute from the conqueror!) They stacked their arms and tented on the field.



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